



★ US MILITARY'S ★ GREATEST BATTLES

★ THE HISTORIC CONFLICTS THAT DEFINED A NATION ★



Digital
Edition



FOURTH
EDITION

★ LITTLE BIGHORN ★ YORKTOWN ★ OKINAWA ★ THE ALAMO ★ IWO JIMA

Welcome to

**HISTORY
of
WAR**



US MILITARY'S GREATEST BATTLES

When a single shot was fired - perhaps by accident - on 19 April 1775 at Lexington, the course of history was changed forever. The United States of America famously won its freedom from the United Kingdom just a few years later, but the fighting didn't stop there. As time has gone on, the country's soldiers have battled against Germans, Mexicans, Native Americans and even each other.

In **History of War US Military's Greatest Battles**, uncover the key moments that have defined the nation's history. Explore the Siege of Yorktown, where the tide of the Revolutionary War turned in the Patriots' favour, and take a wander on the battlefield of the Little Bighorn, where the US Army suffered a crushing defeat against the Lakota Sioux and Cheyenne tribes. Join the navy in the Battle of the Atlantic, and trace the American Civil War back to its first fight at the First Battle of Bull Run. Turn the page to discover why the United States has come to dominate the sea, sky and land and explore the defining battles that have shaped the nation.



「 FUTURE 」



US MILITARY'S GREATEST BATTLES

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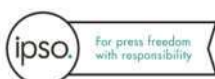
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MR PRESIDENT: FROM SOLDIER TO STATESMEN

MILITARY EXPERIENCE HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN
IMPORTANT FACTOR IN DECIDING WHO GOVERNS
FROM THE WHITE HOUSE AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
OF THE UNITED STATES

The office of president of the United States is the most powerful and influential in the world. Democratically elected from potentially 219 million voters, the president's executive role in federal government means that he or she presides over the largest global economy and, perhaps most crucially, is commander-in-chief of the USA's armed forces. The title is no formality and is enshrined in Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution that states: "The President shall be commander in chief of the army and navy of the United States, and of the militia of the several states, when called into the actual service of the United States."

When the Constitution was created and ratified between 1787-88, the army, navy and marines were the only military organisations that the president was responsible for but since that time the role has greatly expanded and now also includes intelligence services and one of the largest arsenals of nuclear weapons in the world. With such an emphasis on hard



George Washington crossing the Delaware. This iconic painting of the Continental Army's most famous manoeuvre has become an integral part of the American story

GEORGE WASHINGTON

Years in service: 1752-83
Presidential term: 1789-97

Perhaps the most famous soldier-president was the very first. George Washington's role as commander-in-chief of the rebellious Continental Army during the American War of Independence was decisive in ensuring the colonists' victory against their British masters, and ultimately led to the creation of the United States.

His military career began in 1752 when he was made a major in the Virginia militia and gained a reputation for efficiency and courage. By 1754, he was a lieutenant colonel and fought in the French and Indian War for the British, commanding the Virginia Regiment. Although he was known for his courage, Washington was defeated and captured by the French at the Battle of Fort Necessity, and played a controversial role in the British defeat at the Battle of the Monongahela. Despite these setbacks, he learned much about British command principles and their operational techniques in America. However, he refused a commission in the regular British Army.

By 1775, Washington was a member of Congress and commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. His task in the upcoming war against the British would be difficult. Although he was experienced by colonial standards, he had only commanded 2,000 militiamen at most. This was tiny compared to conventional European armies, but he knew British weaknesses fighting in North America and was an imposing commander. However, his first fighting forays into the war were almost disastrous.

During the 1776 New York campaign, Washington suffered multiple defeats. By the end of the year, his army had been chased from New York into New Jersey and Pennsylvania. However, at his lowest ebb, Washington seized the initiative by moving his forces across the Delaware River on 30 December and then defeated the British twice at Trenton and Princeton.

Washington's real military achievements were arguably off the battlefield. In an age when disease was deadly, he inoculated his army against smallpox in 1777, which reduced deaths from the disease from 17 to one per cent. This was unprecedented and it enabled him to maintain numerical strength. He also managed his army despite crippling supply problems by astute delegation. By 1781, he could not properly pay his troops but he had held his army together long enough for French troops to arrive and tip the balance.

At the Siege of Yorktown, a force under Washington defeated the British and forced General Cornwallis to surrender along with more than 7,000 of his troops. It forced the British to negotiate and in 1783, the USA became a reality. Six years later, Washington was elected as the country's first president and commander-in-chief.

power, it is no coincidence that the role of president is strongly associated with the armed forces and it is reflected in the choice of men (so far) that have been elected to high office. As of August 2018, out of 44 presidents only 12 have not seen service in the US military or state militias. Significant non-military presidents include Donald Trump, Barack Obama, and the founding father John Adams.

Remarkably, presidents Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D Roosevelt hold the ironic honour of successfully leading the USA through the world wars despite having no military experience. Nonetheless, the role of previous military service is crucial to the presidential story and is interwoven with conflicts throughout American history. Presidents have served as soldiers in the forefront of every significant war up until 1945, and their successful fighting careers often had a direct bearing on their future electoral victories from the American War of Independence through the Civil War and finally World War II.

In an interesting coincidence, there have been no presidents who served in America's most high-profile defeat: the Vietnam War. This anomaly includes distinguished but unsuccessful presidential candidates like John Kerry and John McCain. Success on the battlefield in victorious wars for the United States has been equated to potential presidential achievement and, rightly or wrongly, commanders-in-chief have often been elected on the back of their wartime heroics, regardless of their political and administrative experience or ability.

The stories involved with each military president varies enormously, from saving lives, leading men to victory on the battlefield, winning medals for distinguished service and even commanding whole armies from different nations in complicated coalitions. In many ways, the United States has been forged by war and its presidents have been a critical factor in this part of history both during their terms of office and, most intriguingly, before.

ANDREW JACKSON

Years in service: 1812-19
Presidential term: 1829-37

Andrew Jackson is the only president to have fought in both the War of Independence and the War of 1812. When he was 13 years old, he joined a local militia as a courier and was captured by the British in 1781, making him the only president to have been a prisoner of war. Jackson was left permanently scarred when a British officer slashed his left hand and face after he refused to polish his boots.

Despite a lack of real military experience, Jackson was appointed a major general during the War of 1812 and he won the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814 against Creek Native Americans. He was a popular commander and was known as 'Old Hickory' in reference to being as tough as the deep-rooted tree.

Jackson's greatest victory came on 8 January 1815 when, despite being outnumbered almost two to one, he led 5,000 soldiers to an unexpected victory against the British at the Battle of New Orleans. This was the last major engagement of the war and Jackson became a national hero.



■ The American victory at the Battle of New Orleans in 1815 was the culmination of Jackson's lifelong antipathy towards the British

ULYSSES S GRANT

Years in service: 1839-54, 1861-69 **Presidential term:** 1789-97

From humble origins, Grant attended West Point in exchange for a free education and served as a lieutenant during the Mexican-American War that raged between 1846 and 1848 – a conflict he later viewed as morally dubious. He resigned as a captain in 1854 and subsequently struggled in civilian life. In 1860, he was forced to work in his brother's leather shop but his fortunes changed when civil war broke out. The north needed experienced officers and Grant rapidly went from being a captain to brigadier general.

In 1861, Grant led troops for the first time at the inconclusive Battle of Belmont, but he learned much about Confederate tactics and forced Fort Donelson to surrender in February 1862, earning national praise and a promotion to major general. Although he was sharply criticised for high Union losses at the Battle of Shiloh in April 1862, Grant was kept on for his willingness to fight and his supreme calmness in combat. Grant was the first Union commander to go on the offensive and he came into his own orchestrating the capture of Vicksburg, Mississippi when he cut his own supply lines and used enemy resources to feed his troops. After defeating two Confederate armies in five engagements, Vicksburg came under siege and six weeks later and the Southern garrison of more than 27,000 men surrendered on 4 July 1863. This was a crushing victory and President Lincoln declared, "Grant is my man and I am his."

By early 1864, Grant was the top general and Lincoln named him as commander of all Union forces. His relentless tactics led to high losses among northern troops and as a



■ Grant pictured as head of the Union Army at his camp at Cold Harbor, Virginia, in 1864. President Lincoln described him as indispensable, "I cannot spare this man; he fights"

result, he earned the nickname 'The Butcher'. Nevertheless, the south was decimated and on 9 April 1865, General Robert E Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox House. This ended the war and Grant was a hero of the Union.

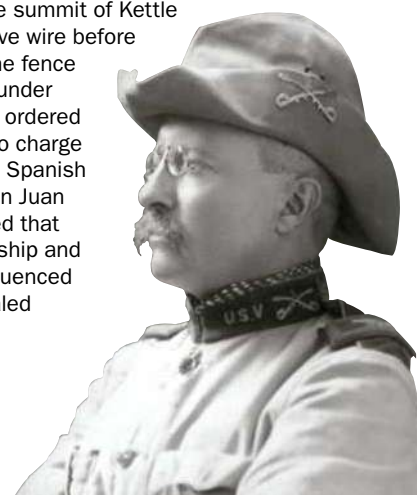
THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Years in service: 1882-86, 1898
Presidential term: 1901-09

Despite winning the Nobel Peace Prize as president, Theodore Roosevelt's reputation is based on high adventure and military exploits. He was a keen advocate of exercise and loved outdoor pursuits like horse riding and boxing. These activities made him ideally placed to become a soldier and he had been a lieutenant in the New York National Guard.

In May 1898 he resigned his post of assistant secretary of the navy and volunteered as commander of the 1st US Volunteer Cavalry in the Spanish-American War. This unit, better known as the 'Rough Riders', was an elite but varied company made up of over 1,000 gentlemen, cowboys, prospectors, sheriffs and even singers and Native Americans. The Rough Riders left America and disembarked in Cuba on 22 June 1898 to fight the Spanish.

On 1 July, Roosevelt played a significant role at the Battle of San Juan Hill. Although he had been hit by shrapnel, he exhorted his troops to support army regulars up Kettle Hill but ended up leading the advance. When he was 35 metres from the summit of Kettle Hill, he cut defensive wire before climbing through the fence and taking the hill under heavy fire. He then ordered the Rough Riders to charge after the retreating Spanish up the adjacent San Juan Hill. It is now agreed that Roosevelt's leadership and courage greatly influenced the victory and sealed his reputation.





■ **"I Like Ike".**
Eisenhower was a very popular commander during World War II and he was adept at smoothing over often-tense relations between the Allies

DWIGHT D EISENHOWER

Years in service: 1911-48, 1950-52
Presidential term: 1953-61

The election of Dwight D Eisenhower to the presidency is an obvious case of a candidate greatly aided by a glittering military career. However, like Grant before him, 'Ike' was not destined for greatness until a severe emergency plucked him from obscurity.

Eisenhower was an average cadet when he graduated from West Point in 1915. To his disappointment, he was stationed as a tank corps commander in the USA during World War I. He became known for having great organisational skills but for much of the interwar years he was only a major. By 1941 he was a colonel, but this changed in World War II.

Eisenhower showed great strategic planning and it earned him rapid promotions. By November 1942, he oversaw Operation Torch in North Africa and then directed the invasions of Sicily and Italy. His diplomatic nature made him the ideal choice to command Operation Overlord and he was later appointed supreme commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force.

As well overseeing Western Europe's liberation and the invasion of Germany, he oversaw cooperation between 11 Allied countries. It was largely thanks to his tact that tensions were overcome and operations were successful. Victory in Europe was largely his creation but he never personally saw battle.

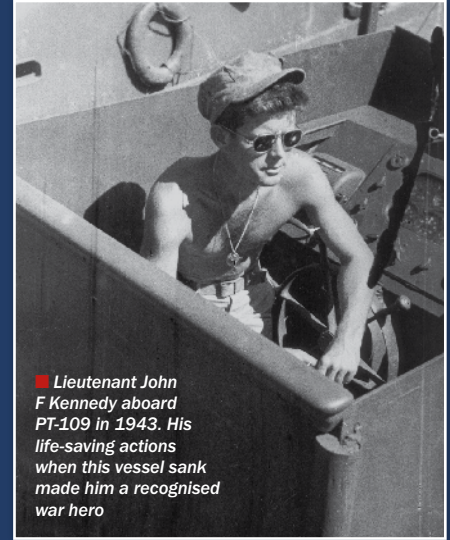
JOHN F KENNEDY

Years in service: 1941-45 **Presidential term:** 1961-63

When the USA entered World War II, John F Kennedy tried to join the navy but was rejected due to his chronic back problems. His influential father managed to get him into the US Naval Reserves and by 1943, he was a lieutenant in charge of a small Patrol Torpedo (PT) boat. His first combat command was on PT-109.

In August 1943, PT-109 was struck by a Japanese destroyer. Two crew members were killed while the rest were thrown into the water. Kennedy gathered the survivors by pulling them onto the boat's wreckage. He then ordered his men to swim to the nearest island, about five kilometres away, and towed one of the wounded sailors with his bare teeth. He sent a message carved on a coconut to the nearest American base and his crew was eventually rescued.

He was subsequently awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for lifesaving at sea, as well as a Purple Heart. Kennedy's war-time actions would later benefit his successful 1960 presidential campaign.



■ **Lieutenant John F Kennedy** aboard PT-109 in 1943. His life-saving actions when this vessel sank made him a recognised war hero



■ **Bush** in his early 20s seated in his Grumman TBM Avenger on an aircraft carrier, 1944

GEORGE HW BUSH

Years in service: 1942-45
Presidential term: 1989-92

Born in 1924, George HW Bush is the last living former president to have seen combat in World War II. He enlisted in the navy on his 18th birthday in 1942 and he became the service's youngest pilot in 1943. He was assigned to the Pacific theatre and flew 58 missions during the war aboard USS San Jacinto, flying Grumman TBM Avenger bombers.

On 2 September 1944, Bush was ordered to destroy a Japanese radio station in the Bonin Islands but his aircraft was hit by enemy fire. Although his Avenger was in flames, he continued strafing the target before bailing out close to an island near Iwo Jima. He was shortly rescued by a US submarine and was later awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism under fire.

DUTIES OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

Today, the president of the US is always prepared for war

Today, the responsibilities of commander-in-chief are multi-faceted. Each morning, the president receives a classified presidential daily briefing from his national security advisor, either in person or by tablet. The contents of this brief provide new intelligence about possible crises in the world. It forms part of the Department of Defence, where chiefs of the four armed services all report directly to the president. But the president cannot declare war: the Constitution gives that right to Congress. However, he can order wartime manoeuvres like deploying troops and giving permission for air strikes and invasions.

Ultimately, the president is responsible for preserving peace at home and in areas that involve American interests. A president also has the authority to protect US allies and enforce international treaties or call on military forces to quell civil disobedience. The sitting president also decides who should be recognised for outstanding service.

During his presidency, Obama used his role to scale down American forces abroad by ending the US combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. He also authorised the Navy SEAL operation that saw Osama bin Laden hunted down and killed.



■ **President Obama** and his national security team



THE 1700s

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When a shot rang out on 19 April 1775, it was the beginning of a journey to create a new nation

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Although they lost the battle, the Americans showed they might not lose the war

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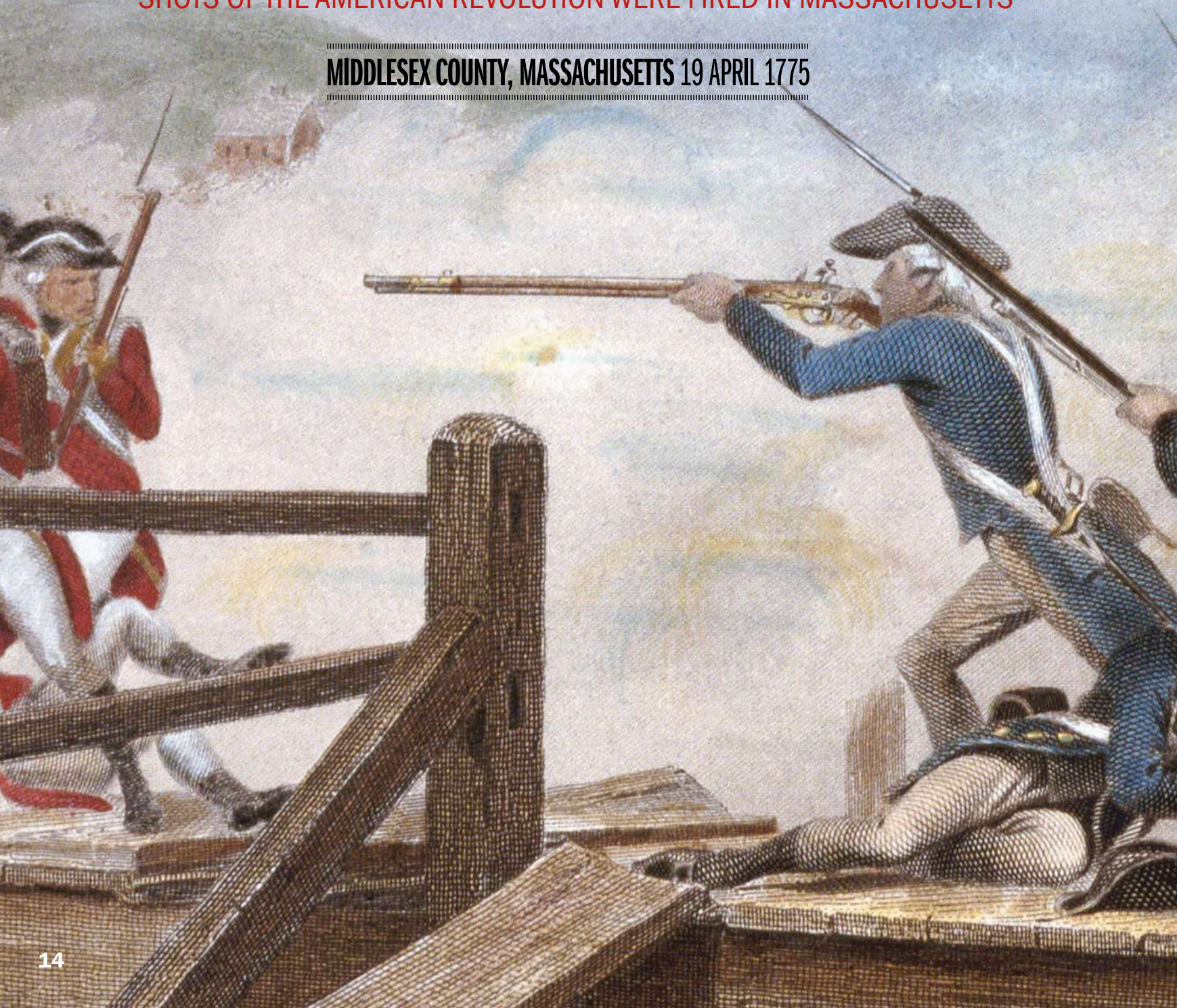




BATTLES OF LEXINGTON AND CONCORD

AFTER YEARS OF POLITICAL POSTURING AND CIVIL UNREST, THE FIRST SHOTS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION WERE FIRED IN MASSACHUSETTS

MIDDLESEX COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS 19 APRIL 1775



By the spring of 1775, the winding road to revolution had made its way into the Massachusetts countryside a few kilometres northwest of Boston, an occupied city seething with rage against the 3,000-man British garrison under General Thomas Gage.

Since the imposition of the Coercive Acts in 1774, the Port of Boston had been closed to trade and Parliament had declared that the entire colony was in rebellion. Gage was aware that the Massachusetts Assembly, meeting in seclusion, had called for the organisation of a militia and sought support from other colonial governments in raising an army of up to 18,000 men in the event of war. The rebels had stockpiled arms and ammunition at various locations, and the prudent course of action was to seize these caches in order to diminish the obvious threat.

Gage planned a swift expedition to secure the stores at Concord about 26 kilometres outside of Boston. Lieutenant Colonel Francis

Smith of the Tenth Regiment of Foot was detailed with leading about 700 elite light infantrymen, grenadiers and marines of several regiments to accomplish the task. Although he hoped for secrecy, Gage realised that there were in fact spies everywhere. Indeed, soon enough the British plans were well known within Patriot circles.

Forward to Concord

On the night of 18 April, rebel riders, including Paul Revere, William Dawes and Samuel Prescott, were raising the alarm. The British Army was out in force and headed toward Concord. At around 10pm, the soldiers had been roused from fitful sleep and formed into ranks. Ferried across Back Bay to Lechmere Point, they began their fateful trek out of Boston. They undoubtedly heard the ringing of church bells and the boom of cannon, which signalled to the uneasy country farmers in their path that the raid was in motion. Smith's route took his column through the town of Lexington,

about 16 kilometres from Boston, and at around 4.30am, as the first streaks of daylight began to tint the eastern sky, the British vanguard approached the village.

Major John Pitcairn, a Royal Marine officer and second-in-command of the expedition, led from the front. On the edge of town, he heard a steady drumbeat calling militiamen to arms, prompting him to order his men to halt long enough to load their weapons and deploy in double ranks.

The local militia had responded rapidly to the British advance. The citizens took pride in their speed and preparedness, earning themselves the nickname of 'minutemen'. A 45-year-old captain called John Parker, a veteran Indian fighter and former member of Rogers' Rangers who had fought with the British during the French and Indian War, assembled 140 citizen-soldiers in Lexington, the first arriving at 1am. By the time the British had appeared about half had gone home, perhaps believing that the situation was a hoax.



"AS THE TROOPS SPILLED ONTO THE GREEN, A SINGLE SHOT RANG OUT"

Disperse, ye rebels!

The British forces approached Lexington from the south, and Pitcairn ordered his light infantry forward at the double quick, skirting the edges of the village green around both sides of the community church. Then they saw Parker's militia formed in two lines. Although the Patriots were not barring the road to Concord, they still presented a challenge. Pitcairn rode forward and bellowed, "Disperse, ye rebels! I say disperse! Lay down your arms ye damned rebels!"

For a moment, it appeared as though a direct confrontation might be averted. Parker knew his handful of militia was outnumbered and might be slaughtered to a man if he did not allow them to scatter. He passed the word, and the rebels trickled toward the edges of the village green, disappearing into the shadows. The slow pace of compliance and the fact that the militiamen were holding onto their weapons rather than surrendering them evidently irked Pitcairn. As his troops spilled onto the green, a single shot rang out – what would turn out to be one of the most important shots in history.

While there is no clear indication as to which side fired first, the well-trained British soldiers loosed several volleys in succession, despite Pitcairn's repeated calls for them to cease fire. Running for cover, the militiamen fired a few haphazard shots to no effect.

Lieutenant Colonel Smith heard the gunfire and hurried to the scene as Pitcairn attempted to regain control of his infantrymen, excited by the eruption of violence and straining to continue the fight that was by now well under way. Only one British soldier suffered a slight injury to his knee. However, eight militiamen lay dead and ten were wounded on Lexington Green. The British formed up, raised a cheer and fired a victory volley before continuing on the road toward Concord.

While the British forged ahead, word of the bloodshed at Lexington preceded them. Militiamen rose from their beds across the countryside and gathered in the vicinity of Concord, 400 strong as the red-coated column approached the town. About one-third of these men, led by Captain William Smith, marched toward the expected British route about 7am. When Smith spotted the British column along the road he quickly withdrew to the north and took possession of a low ridge that commanded the approaches. In turn, the British under Colonel Smith demonstrated toward the position. The militia abandoned the high ground, crossed the North Bridge that spanned the Concord River, and occupied Punktasset Hill.

As his soldiers entered Concord, Colonel Smith divided his force into three components to provide security and search for rebel weapons and ammunition stores. Captain Walter Laurie of the 43rd Regiment recalled, "During the time the Grenadiers were employed in destroying the magazine of flour, gun carriages & at Concord, six companies of Light Infantry under the command of Captain Parsons were detached to a Bridge about one mile from Town, in order, as I was informed, to destroy



■ Militiamen take cover and fire on advancing British soldiers on 19 April 1775 during the battles of Lexington and Concord

some guns and military stores, supposed to be collected thereabouts."

The home of Colonel James Barrett, commander of the Concord militia, was nearby, and Colonel Smith sent three companies to find cannon and other weapons supposedly stored there. Other troops searched the buildings in the town and somehow set fire to the county courthouse and other structures. From Punktasset Hill, Barrett watched the streaks of smoke and flame, fearing the town would be burned to the ground. The unbridled anger of his men compelled him to respond, and soon he led about 400 militiamen down the slope and toward the British at the North Bridge, giving strict orders not to fire unless they were fired upon.

Roar of muskets

Captain Laurie's light infantry did open fire moments later, but their first shots were erratic. Initially, the militiamen thought the soldiers might only be firing powder charges meant to frighten the farmers. However, when a ball zipped by one man's head, he cried out. There was no doubt that the British were firing loaded guns.

The minutemen levelled their muskets and unleashed a volley that felled at least seven British soldiers, although some



■ The revolution begins on Lexington Green on the morning of 19 April 1775 as British soldiers and minutemen exchange fire

reports allude to as many as 12 casualties, with four officers among them. Laurie pulled back from the bridge, and the three companies of light infantry at Barrett's farm were temporarily cut off. Apparently, the rebels did not realise they held a tactical advantage and split in half, some men tending to their two dead and two wounded friends while others retired temporarily to the ridge they had occupied early in the encounter.

Surveying the situation, Colonel Smith was keenly aware that the number of militia was growing steadily. Fortuitously, he had requested that reinforcements from Boston march to his aid in the event of hostilities. Expecting these additional troops to meet his command on the road back to Boston and believing that he had accomplished his mission, Smith ordered a general retirement around noon. The retrograde movement soon became a harrowing experience for Smith and his men.

Running battle and retreat

At Meriam's Corner, the farmstead of Josiah Meriam that had stood on the outskirts of Concord since 1663, a brief but sharp clash occurred. From there the pace of the British withdrawal quickened, the militiamen nipping at their heels on the road toward Lexington, firing at them from behind rocks, bushes and trees and taking shots from open windows of houses

that lined the road. When the British halted to fan soldiers out into the brush to dragnet militiamen, their stationary main body was harassed with concentrated fire.

The British command was on the verge of becoming a disorganised rabble as the soldiers clawed their way into Lexington. To his great relief, Smith met a brigade of soldiers sent from Boston as he had requested. With 1,000 men and artillery, Brigadier General Hugh Percy stood firm while their beleaguered comrades caught their breath for an hour. One observer remembered "their tongues hanging out of their mouths, like those of dogs after a chase".

When the march resumed, militiamen harried the soldiers through the hamlets of Menotomy and Cambridge. By evening, the ragged British ranks reached Charlestown Neck and the shelter of big guns aboard Royal Navy warships. It had been a dark day for the British Army. Approximately 250 soldiers were killed or wounded, while the militiamen counted 90 casualties. War had come.

The news of the fighting at Lexington and Concord spread swiftly through the colonies, now more united than ever in a common cause. Virginia statesman Patrick Henry remarked, "The distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders are no more. I am not a Virginian, but an American!"



WHO FIRED THE FIRST SHOT?

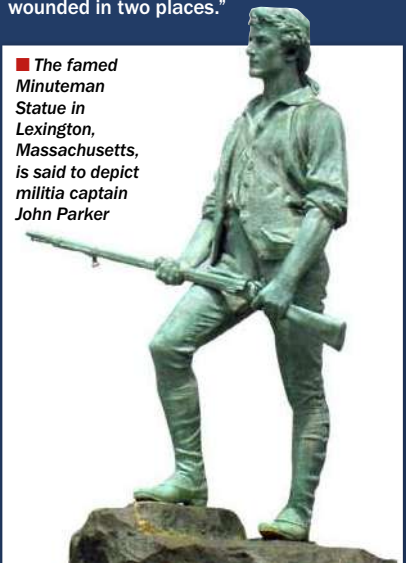
They pulled the trigger and changed global history forever, but who started the revolution?

While the identity of the individual who fired the first shot on Lexington Green on 19 April 1775 will probably never be known, it is readily apparent that both sides stood firm in their conviction that it was the other.

Three days after the battle, the Massachusetts assembly formed a committee to investigate the circumstances surrounding the fighting. Statesman Elbridge Gerry served as chairman, and several militiamen gave accounts. On 25 April, Captain John Parker testified that he had gathered the militia at Lexington and consulted with them "on what to do". He commented that they "concluded not to be discovered, not to meddle or make with said Regular Troops unless they should insult us, and upon their sudden approach, I immediately ordered our Militia to disperse and not to fire. Immediately Said Troops made their appearance and rushed furiously, fired upon and killed eight of our party without receiving any provocation therefore from us."

Major John Pitcairn, the ranking British officer on the scene, reported from camp on 26 April that his light infantry had begun to chase some militiamen as they ran toward a stone wall. "I instantly called to the soldiers not to fire, but surround and disarm them and after several repetitions of these positive orders to the men, not to fire, etc. – some of the rebels who had jumped over the wall, fired four or five shots at the soldiers, which wounded a man of the Tenth and my horse was wounded in two places."

■ The famed Minuteman Statue in Lexington, Massachusetts, is said to depict militia captain John Parker



BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL

ALTHOUGH DEFEATED, THE AMERICANS MANAGED TO INFLICT SEVERE LOSSES ON THE BRITISH AND PROVE THAT A DETERMINED MILITIA COULD HOLD AN ARMY

CHARLESTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 17 JUNE 1775

The American Revolutionary War was barely a month and a half into its inception, and while the butchery and mass loss of life that would tear the nation asunder lay ahead in the dark eight years to come, the forces of the kingdom of Great Britain and the rebellious militiamen of the Colonialists were prepared for one of the first formal clashes of arms.

In the wake of the battles of Lexington and Concord – which saw the Colonials drive British forces into Charlestown and across the Charles River into Boston, effectively starting the Patriot-led Siege of Boston – the British couldn't allow for another defeat at the hands of the rebels. By 19 April 1775, a force of 15,000 men surrounded the towns, cutting off supplies and access via land. Thankfully for the small contingent of Redcoats stationed there under the command of General Thomas Gage, Boston still had access to the fully prepared Boston Harbor. The Charles River was dominated by British warships, meaning the city could be supplied indefinitely.

However, a large contingent of Colonial forces occupying the hills and ridges of the Charlestown Peninsula could not be tolerated. If the Colonials managed to obtain and manoeuvre artillery pieces onto these hills, they would have the capability to bombard the city and drive the British to retreat onto the waters to surrender.

Geographically, the Charlestown Peninsula was 1.6 kilometres long from its isthmus (a small, neck-like opening of land) to its tip. It consisted of raised hills and ridges, with Breed's Hill to the south and Bunker Hill to the north. Small it may have been, but controlling it had the potential to accelerate Washington's siege and place Boston into Patriot hands.

As May arrived, British reinforcements began to roll in by sea, eventually increasing the population of Redcoat soldiers to about 6,000. Later that month, on 25 May, three British generals arrived in Boston aboard HMS Cerberus. Gage had requested the presence of more generals as he had little intention of staying put in Boston while the Patriots amassed their forces outside. Those generals, William Howe, Henry Clinton and John Burgoyne, were ordered to assist Gage in breaking out of the city and bringing the fight direct to the Colonials.

By June, Gage, Howe, Clinton and Burgoyne had drawn up a plan to drive the patriots out. They intended to take the Dorchester Neck, thus fortifying the vulnerable Dorchester Heights. British forces would then progress onto Roxbury and meet the Colonial forces there. Simultaneously, another force would flank the Charlestown Heights and push to drive the Colonials out of Cambridge.

However, the plan was soon thrown out of the window when the British spied militiamen activity on the hills across from the city. That activity consisted of 1,200 Colonials under the command of Colonel William Prescott and led to the construction of a fort-like network of barriers around Breed's Hill. The redoubt was square in shape, roughly 40 metres deep with 1.8-metre-high walls. It wasn't the sturdiest of structures, but its high elevation and proximity to Boston would provide an invaluable line of defence should the Patriots manage to set cannons upon it.

While the British thought it little cause for concern to begin with, the steady increase of Patriot soldiers made one thing clear: the Colonials meant to move on Boston. For the British, something had to be done.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Battle of Bunker Hill was remembered by the British for more than just the sheer loss of life suffered by the Redcoats. The battle showed General William Howe that attacking American fortifications head-on was suicide. From then on, all British engagements with Colonial forces used flanking tactics instead.

A HIGH PRICE PAID

While the British claimed victory at Bunker Hill, the Redcoats suffered terrible losses. When the last musket had finally been fired, a total of 1,150 regulars had fallen to take the hills surrounding Boston Harbor. On the Colonial side, the Americans suffered about 450 deaths.

"IF THE COLONIALS MANAGED TO OBTAIN AND MANOEUVRE ARTILLERY PIECES ONTO THE HILLS, THEY WOULD HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO BOMBARD THE CITY AND DRIVE THE BRITISH TO RETREAT ONTO THE WATERS TO SURRENDER"

**LESS BUNKER, MORE BREED**

Despite the fight being associated with Bunker Hill, a great deal of the skirmishes actually took place on Breed's Hill. This was mainly due to the rudimentary redoubt (a network of small forts linked together) that had been built on top of this larger mount.

**MUTED CANNONS**

The British attack on the American encampments on both Bunker Hill and Breed's Hill were meant to be preceded by a series of bombardments from artillery cannons positioned near Boston Harbor. However, this proved impossible, as the six-pound guns couldn't fire the 12-pound balls provided.

**THE FALL OF WARREN**

The death of General Joseph Warren in the closing hours of the Battle of Bunker Hill was perhaps as big a blow to the Patriots as the loss of the hills themselves. Killed during the taking of the redoubt in the third attack by the British, his death was immortalised in a famous painting by artist and patriot John Trumbull.



GREAT BRITAIN

TROOPS 3,000
CASUALTIES 1,150



WILLIAM HOWE LEADER

While Gage was in charge of protecting Boston, defeating the encroaching Patriots fell to British Army officer William Howe.

Strengths Known for his daring military feats.

Weakness He was prone to underestimating his opponents' strengths.



52ND (OXFORDSHIRE) REGIMENT ON FOOT UNIT

The 52nd were some of the main infantry groups used.

Strengths Well trained and readily supplied, the Redcoats were far more physically prepared.

Weakness Struggled badly without any cavalry or cannon support.

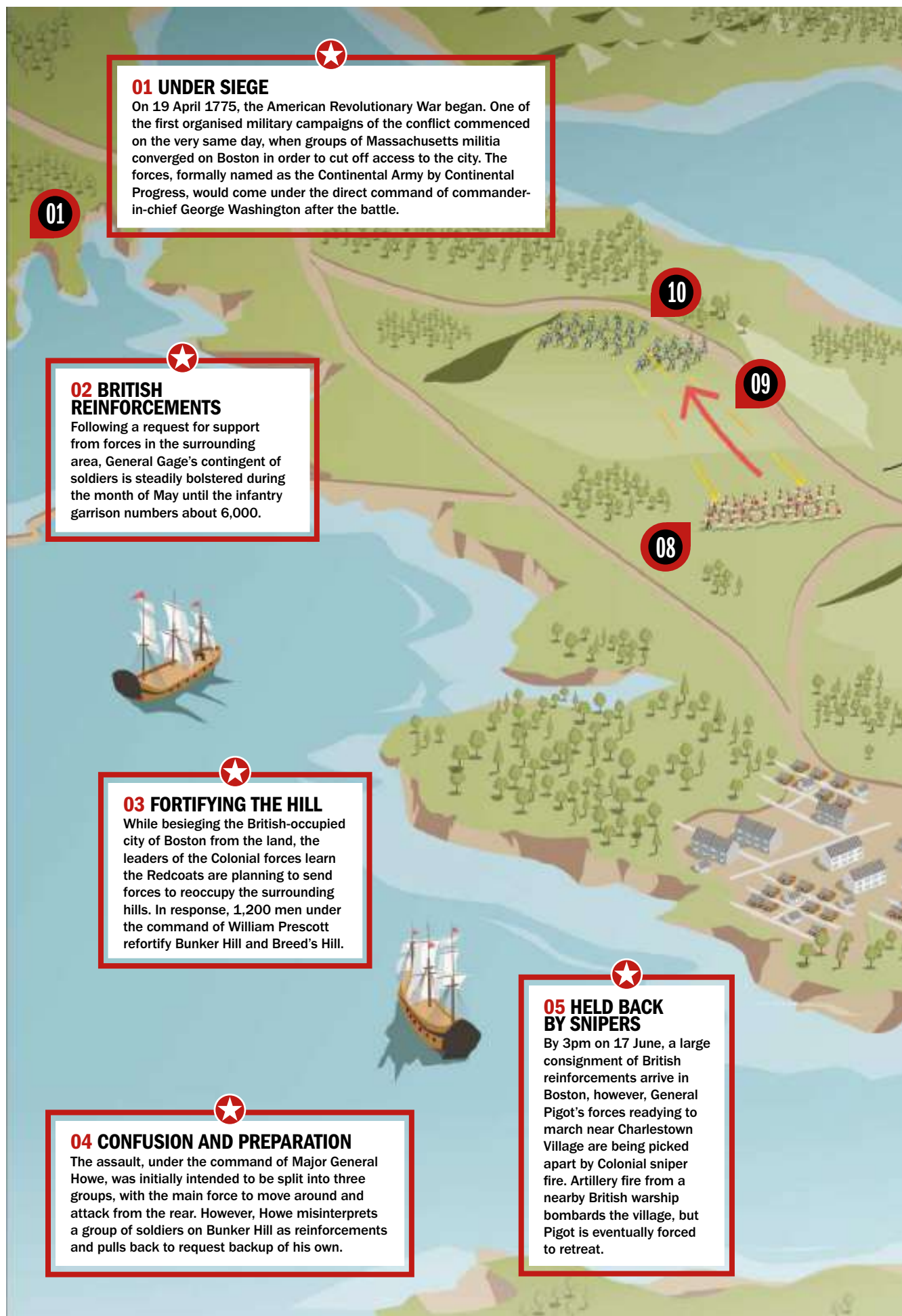


BAYONET KEY WEAPON

When the British broke through the redoubt, they made short work of the Patriots with their muskets.

Strengths Ideal weapon for close-quarters combat.

Weakness More cumbersome to carry in battle.



01 UNDER SIEGE

On 19 April 1775, the American Revolutionary War began. One of the first organised military campaigns of the conflict commenced on the very same day, when groups of Massachusetts militia converged on Boston in order to cut off access to the city. The forces, formally named as the Continental Army by Continental Congress, would come under the direct command of commander-in-chief George Washington after the battle.

02 BRITISH REINFORCEMENTS

Following a request for support from forces in the surrounding area, General Gage's contingent of soldiers is steadily bolstered during the month of May until the infantry garrison numbers about 6,000.

03 FORTIFYING THE HILL

While besieging the British-occupied city of Boston from the land, the leaders of the Colonial forces learn the Redcoats are planning to send forces to reoccupy the surrounding hills. In response, 1,200 men under the command of William Prescott reoccupy Bunker Hill and Breed's Hill.

04 CONFUSION AND PREPARATION

The assault, under the command of Major General Howe, was initially intended to be split into three groups, with the main force to move around and attack from the rear. However, Howe misinterprets a group of soldiers on Bunker Hill as reinforcements and pulls back to request backup of his own.

05 HELD BACK BY SNIPERS

By 3pm on 17 June, a large consignment of British reinforcements arrive in Boston, however, General Pigot's forces readying to march near Charlestown Village are being picked apart by Colonial sniper fire. Artillery fire from a nearby British warship bombards the village, but Pigot is eventually forced to retreat.



UNITED COLONIES

TROOPS 1,500
CASUALTIES 450



ISRAEL PUTNAM LEADER

Alongside Colonel William Prescott, Putnam led the forces that attempted to repel troops on Breed's Hill. **Strengths** A highly skilled tactician and strategist. **Weakness** Known to work his men to exhaustion.



6TH MASSACHUSETTS REGIMENT UNIT

The 6th were raised in June 1775 to form the Continental Army. **Strengths** Made of local men with a greater knowledge of the area. **Weakness** Not as well drilled as the British.



SIX-POUND CANNON KEY WEAPON

While not used in the battle fully, the threat of cannons on both sides accelerated the pace of the battle. **Strengths** The power to pummel cities as well as troops. **Weakness** Muzzle loaded and smooth bored, making them highly inaccurate when fired.



01 THE BROOKLYN LINES

The main American defensive works on Long Island comprises five forts or redoubts, with connecting trenches strung across the neck of the Brooklyn peninsula. The Americans hope to inflict serious casualties when the British attack.

02 THE GOWANUS HEIGHTS

An advanced defensive line occupies a ridge of thickly wooded high ground running across the island. Three routes through the Gowanus Heights are defended with infantry and artillery units.

03 THE UNGUARDED PASS

Bafflingly, the Americans fail to defend a fourth route through the Gowanus Heights – the Jamaica Pass – perhaps hoping it is so far away that the British will not be aware of it.

04 THE FLANKING MARCH

The British are aware of this route (Henry Clinton, Howe's second-in-command, had lived on Long Island as a boy) and mount a nighttime flanking march with the intention of getting 10,000 redcoats behind the first American defensive line.

05 THE DIVERSION

To occupy the Americans' attention while the flanking march is undertaken, Howe orders General James Grant to stage a diversionary assault against defenders along the Coast Road. This also serves to draw reinforcements away from the Brooklyn lines.

10 THE AMERICAN RETREAT

Two nights later, under cover of darkness, Washington is able to evacuate his entire command, along with all of their artillery. Although the Americans consider this to have been a humiliating defeat, their army has survived to fight another day.

BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND

THE FIRST MAJOR BATTLE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR WAS ALSO ONE OF THE LARGEST, AND IT SAW THE BRITISH WIN A STUNNING VICTORY

NEW YORK AND LONG ISLAND, US 27-29 AUGUST 1776

09 THE RECALL

With the British in full cry, Howe calls back an attempted assault on the main Brooklyn lines, choosing instead to open siege works. He will later cite a desire to limit casualties as the reason for his controversial decision.

08 THE STAND OF THE MARYLANDERS

To buy time for their comrades to escape across marshland, a portion of the Maryland Regiment stages a delaying action against overwhelming British numbers. Less than a dozen of them escape death, injury or capture, but their sacrifice allows hundreds to escape.

05

08

07 THE RETREAT TO THE LINES

With their position untenable, the Americans flee from the Gowanus Heights and flood back to the Brooklyn defences. Many do not make it as British and Hessian forces attack them front and rear.

06 THE SIGNAL CANNON

At 9am on 27 August, two cannon shots are fired. This is the signal that Howe's flanking column has reached Bedford and the assault on the Gowanus Heights positions can begin in earnest.

Possession of New York was essential if the British were going to gain control over the Hudson River and implement their chosen strategy for the war. The Americans realised this as well and consequently spent months preparing their defences, both on Manhattan (also known as York Island) and Long Island. While Long Island

gave its name to the battle, it is also known as the Battle of Brooklyn and the Battle of Brooklyn Heights.

The British commander, William Howe, had been in no hurry to open his campaign, but he finally landed forces on Long Island on 22 August 1776. Just five days later, his men were ready to attack.

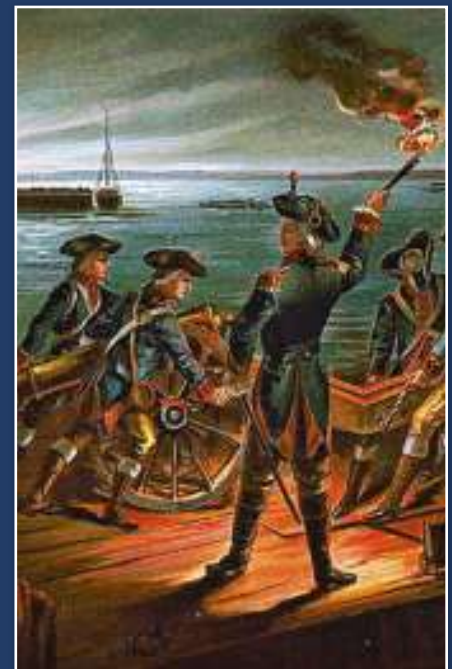
AMERICAN LOSSES

It was once believed that a massacre had played out along the Gowanus Heights, but American losses are now thought to have been far fewer

It is almost impossible to be sure of American casualties during the Battle of Long Island because there is so much confusion over the strength of units in battle that day. Washington's army was riddled with camp diseases and many men were unable to serve with their regiments when the long-awaited British offensive finally began. Add to this confusion over the paper strength of regiments, and it is unclear exactly how many men were manning the Gowanus Heights.

The British also inflated the numbers of dead, wounded and captured, possibly as a simple result of the confusion of the battle, but possibly for propaganda purposes. There was also an unpleasant streak of relish in British reports, with one officer gloating over the fact that the Hessians had been particularly merciless in their use of the bayonet, suggesting that even men attempting to surrender had been run through.

Howe's initial battle report claimed more than 3,000 Americans were either captured or killed, but recent research suggests the number was more like 1,000. Nonetheless, it was still a significant blow for an army to sustain in its first pitched battle and Washington's men were badly shaken, with many deserting in the days that followed.



Although badly mauled on Long Island, the bulk of Washington's army managed to escape over the East River to Manhattan

BATTLE OF SARATOGA

THE CLEAR-CUT AMERICAN VICTORY THAT PAVED THE WAY FOR EUROPEAN AID TO REACH THE REBELLIOUS COLONIALS AND ULTIMATE VICTORY IN THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

STILLWATER, NEW YORK 19 SEPTEMBER – 17 OCTOBER 1777

The gallant and dashing British Lieutenant General John Burgoyne, known as 'Gentleman Johnny' to his appreciative soldiers on account of his relatively enlightened ideas concerning discipline, had a plan. Burgoyne presented his idea to Lord George Germain, secretary of state for the American colonies in the cabinet of King George III's prime minister, Lord Frederick North.

Now 1777, the American rebellion had been underway since April 1775 and showed no signs of coming to a close. Burgoyne, back in London after an earlier stint in North America, delivered a paper he had written to Germain entitled *Thoughts for Conducting the War from the Side of Canada*. In it, Burgoyne outlined his wish to lead an expeditionary army south from Canada down into the American colonies. King George liked the plan and gave it his approval. Burgoyne would take a large body of troops, around 10,000 in all, including British regulars, German mercenaries, Loyalist volunteers and Native American allies, and with these men capture Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain in northern New York, and then do the same to Albany on the Hudson River.

Albany was the primary supply centre of the American Northern Army, and its capture would be a devastating blow to the rebels. Success in the operation would also separate the colonies of New England from those of the Middle Atlantic and the South. Once the three forces had converged, they would turn east against New England, the heartland of the rebellion, and crush it.

Burgoyne was to be joined in this operation by two other British commanders already in the American theatre. Brigadier General Barry St Leger, with 2,100 under his command, moving southwest along the Saint Lawrence

River, was to take Fort Stanwix, continue down the Mohawk River valley and then link up with Burgoyne at Albany. A third force of around 3,000 under Lieutenant General Sir Henry Clinton was to move northward along the Hudson River at the same time.

Oddly, General William Howe, the British commander-in-chief in America, was never sent explicit orders to take part in the operation or to send soldiers to support Burgoyne. He would instead engage George Washington's rebel army at Brandywine in Pennsylvania, winning the battle but not being available to help Burgoyne in the end.

The march South begins

Burgoyne was nothing if not self-confident to the point of cockiness, and before departing for America he had bet leading Whig politician Charles Fox ten pounds that he would win a victory over the rebels inside a year's time. Setting out from Saint Johns, Canada, on 13 June, he crossed over to Lake Champlain between 27 June and 1 July. The American defenders of Fort Ticonderoga promptly abandoned their positions on the night of 5 July. The four gunners manning the battery of guns that the Americans had left behind to cover their retreat proved useless. The men had found a cask of Madeira wine, gotten drunk and were discovered sound asleep the next morning by Native Americans in service to the British.

St Leger's force departed Montreal on 23 June and pushed down the St. Lawrence. By early August St Leger was besieging Fort Stanwix. There was a clash with a relieving American force at Oriskany on 6 August that ended inconclusively. Another relieving force under Major General Benedict Arnold was dispatched to go to the aid of the Fort Stanwix





US MILITARY'S GREATEST BATTLES

garrison. However, troubles with his Native American allies forced St Leger to give up the siege of the fort on 23 August, leaving his artillery behind.

Meanwhile, Burgoyne's men were struggling through the virtually trackless forests of northern New York, harassed by local American forces under the command of Major General Philip Schuyler. To delay Burgoyne further, Schuyler had his men chop down trees to block the miserable roads. Cattle were driven off and food was hidden. At one point, Burgoyne's army was averaging barely more than one mile per day and all of this gained the American forces time, allowing Schuyler to steadily build up his own army.

Burgoyne's baggage train was shown to be entirely deficient for his army's needs in the wilderness, and his cannons lacked enough horses to pull them forward. A foraging expedition of mainly German mercenary troops that he dispatched into New Hampshire under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Friedrich von Baum came to grief at Bennington on 16 August. Baum's Native American allies so frightened local Loyalists that they remained home to defend their families instead of coming out to join the royal cause. Baum was later killed in combat with New Hampshire militia and his battered men surrendered.

A relief force sent out by Burgoyne was slowed by the awful roads and bad weather. It was then set upon by New Hampshire militiamen. The Germans were routed, with over 200 of their men killed or wounded and about 700 captured. Burgoyne's command had been severely depleted and though he did gain a few reinforcements coming down from Canada, he was still far short of his goal of Albany. To make matters worse, his failure to secure food in the raid on Bennington meant he had to halt for days to let his transports bearing provisions to catch up to him. Also, his Native American allies, learning of the Bennington defeat, deserted him for the most part, further depleting his force. Next, news arrived that St. Leger had abandoned Fort Stanwix and that he and his men would not be joining with Burgoyne.

Despite his good showing, Schuyler was replaced in command of the Northern Army by Major General Horatio Gates on 3 August. Gates took over Schuyler's troops, who now numbered around 6,000, a mix of regulars and militia. Gates chose to move his army to Bemis Heights overlooking the Hudson River, where the rough terrain and high ground would give him the advantage. Burgoyne would have to move past the Heights if he wanted to make Albany 20 miles further down, as the main road south passed right beneath Gates' position. At the direction of the Polish volunteer Thaddeus Kosciuszko, one of many European officers who had crossed the Atlantic to fight for the American cause, the Heights' defences, already formidable on account of their 200-300-foot elevation, deep ravines, thickly wooded terrain and steep slopes, were improved with earthworks, felled trees and emplacements of batteries of guns.

In the meantime, by 15 September, Burgoyne had continued his southward march and had made the river road. His advance was spearheaded by his engineers, who cleared

away obstacles, but progress averaged a mere three miles per day at this point. While this was happening, in early September Gates received welcome reinforcements, about 1,200 men under the command of Benedict Arnold, bringing his total force up to about 7,000.

Battle of Freeman's Farm: 19 September 1777

Deprived of his Native American scouts, Burgoyne blundered about, learning that Gates was close by only when some of his men – out digging for potatoes in the fields to fill their empty bellies – were surprised by American troops. Now aware of Gates' presence atop Bemis Heights, on 19 September Burgoyne launched a three-pronged attack against the

Americans. In the first of two engagements that together have become known as the Battle of Saratoga, the British vanguard ran into a corps of American riflemen amid the dense woods that surrounded Freeman's Farm. Many British officers were shot by American marksmen. Other forces were soon drawn into the fight. The Americans gave better than they got but were forced to retreat, which they did in good order.

Unlike Burgoyne, Gates was still gaining reinforcements as time passed. He was, however, having trouble with one of his subordinates: Benedict Arnold. Some of Arnold's troops had been involved in the Freeman's Farm battle, but Gates' had neglected to laud anyone among them for their performance in his report to Congress concerning the encounter. Arnold

■ General John Burgoyne suffered defeat as a result of rough terrain, insufficient support from other British commanders and tough American opposition





■ Arnold's heroics at Saratoga are commemorated only by a monument of a foot, indicating that he was wounded in the leg during the battle

lodged a protest at this oversight, and tensions rose to such a high level that Gates eventually ordered Arnold to leave the American camp.

Further south, General Sir Henry Clinton was in the Hudson River highlands. He had no specific orders to help Burgoyne, and the last message he had received from his fellow general on 6 August had informed him that Burgoyne expected to be in Albany by 23 August, which by late September he had still not reached. Clinton sent Burgoyne a message of his own, telling him that he would be making an attack on Fort Montgomery. Clinton took this fort on 6 October, and though another message had arrived from Burgoyne informing him of his plight and asking him to meet him at Albany, he decided to return to New York City, where he was needed to assume command since the two British generals left in charge had become sick.

Battle of Bemis Heights:

7 October 1777

No help would be coming to Burgoyne from any quarter. He was heavily outnumbered, with Gates' army having increased in size to about 11,000, most of whom were continental regular soldiers. Elsewhere, American militia had severed communications with Fort Ticonderoga to the north and were quashing British attempts to collect food for their hungry army. His senior officers advised a retreat, but Burgoyne would hear none of it. Instead, he chose to go on the attack against the American position on Bemis Heights. At 10am on 7 October, his army moved out of its positions around Freeman's Farm, held up by American pickets. Simply getting through the woods with their heavy guns was problematic for the British. The attack was slowed also because it was as much a foraging

expedition as an assault, with the British troops collecting food for their famished horses. The British advance stopped for a while as this process took place.

Gates ordered simultaneous attacks on both flanks of the immobile British line. The attacks were successful and both British wings crumbled, accompanied in their retreat by the artillerymen. The German mercenaries under Major General Friedrich Adolph Riedesel remained in place but were set upon by none other than Benedict Arnold, coming on like an avenging angel to mete out divinely ordained punishment. He had not left the American camp as Gates had ordered and had now come out to fight. He fought like a man possessed, riding a large brown horse and waving his sword to urge his men into the attack. The Germans were eventually pushed from the field.

With the British line disintegrating, Arnold sensed that he could strike a fatal blow against the whole of the British army. He next led an attack on the British field fortifications (in place since the battle at Freeman's Farm) and achieved great success until he received a musket ball in the leg. The chance to crush Burgoyne's army was lost. Arnold was removed from the field, and the attack, with no one of similar energy or courage to lead it, petered out. Losses for the British on the day were reported as 600, with around 150 Americans lost. Burgoyne then withdrew his men behind their field fortifications.

The end at Saratoga

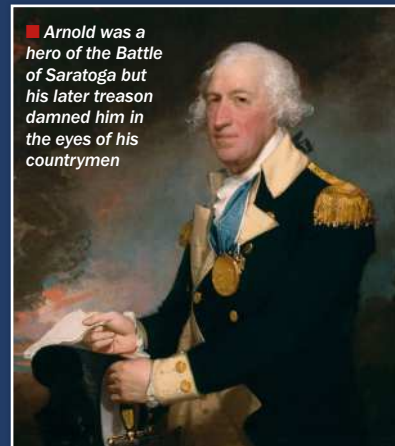
The next day, Burgoyne began to pull out of his positions. Driving rain hindered his movement, and it was not until the early hours of 9 October that the whole of the British army managed to get out. Burgoyne made a new camp at Saratoga, where he remained for the better part of a week. The Americans began to encroach upon him, digging entrenchments of their own, and Burgoyne was soon surrounded. Gates' numbers were still increasing, growing as high as 18,000, and the area was so filled with Americans that Burgoyne had little hope of escape no matter what he did.

With food running out and his men going hungry, Burgoyne asked Gates for terms. These were relatively lenient. His men, numbering over 5,700, were to be paroled, meaning that they would be allowed to depart after pledging that they would never fight again in North America. They were then to go to Boston, where they would board a ship for England. The surrender was made official on 17 October 1777, with Burgoyne meeting Gates in person and giving over his sword, which Gates then handed back to him.

The Americans took huge stocks of arms from the British, but the political rewards of the Battle of Saratoga were worth far more. News of the American victory arrived in Paris on 5 December, and King Louis XVI granted diplomatic recognition to the United States the day afterward. A treaty of alliance followed early the following year on 6 February 1778. The rebellious colonies had obtained the aid of a powerful European ally, which provided money and arms. French help, supplemented by that of Spain and the Netherlands, would prove crucial in securing victory for the United States.



■ Arnold was a hero of the Battle of Saratoga but his later treason damned him in the eyes of his countrymen

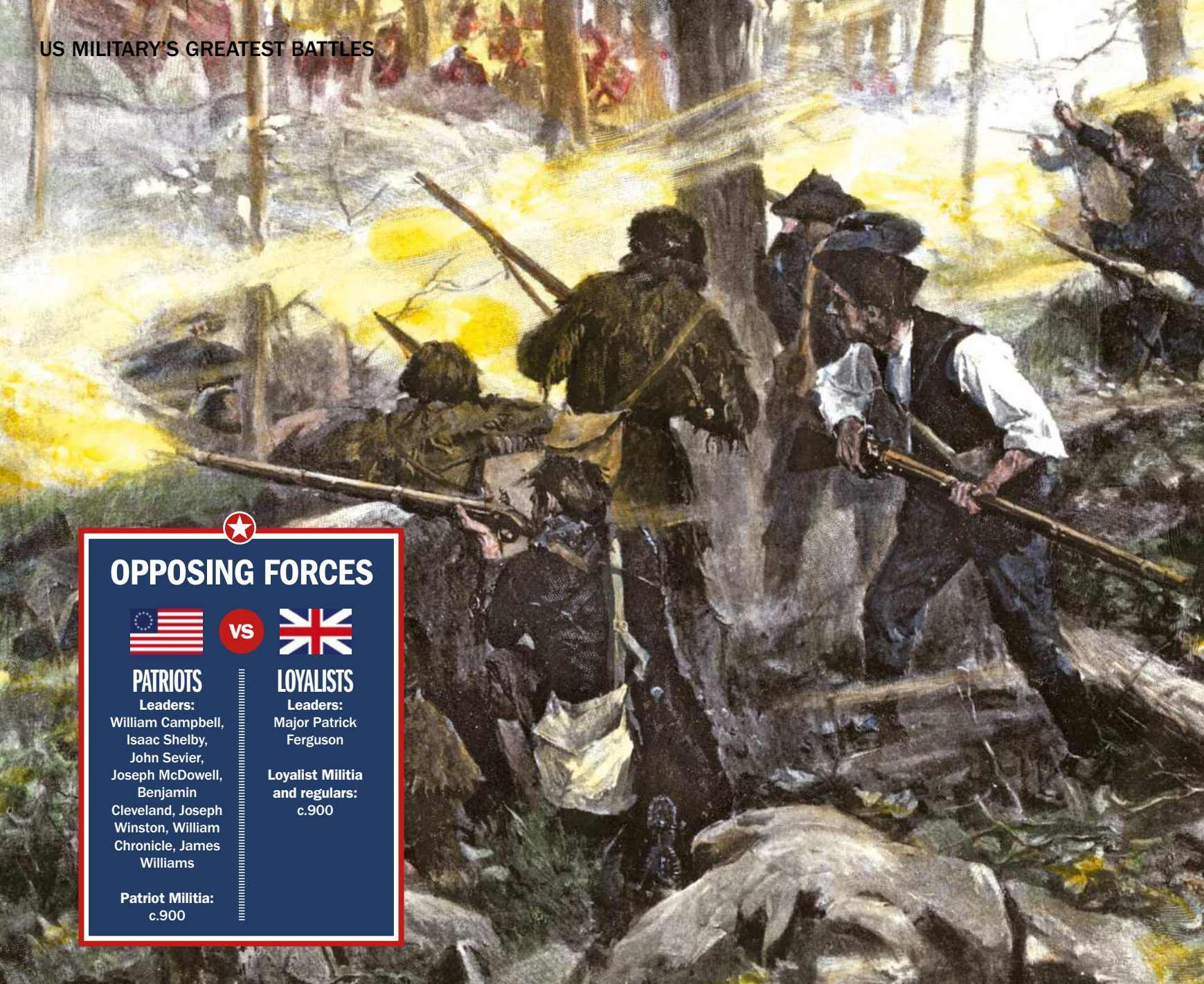


AN AMERICAN HERO TURNS TRAITOROUS

General Benedict Arnold was a merchant before the start of the Revolutionary War. He became a captain of a militia in Connecticut and with Ethan Allen took part in the assault that captured Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain in May 1775. Later that year, General George Washington gave him the command of the expeditionary force tasked with the capture of Québec. After an arduous trek with 700 men through the Maine wilderness, at the end of December 1775 the American army failed in its task and Arnold himself was badly wounded.

Arnold was later made a brigadier general and constructed ships on Lake Champlain. At the Battle of Valcour Island on 11 October 1776, he inflicted heavy losses on a British flotilla despite losing the engagement. Though it had been a loss, Arnold managed to prevent the British from gaining control of the northern Hudson River. Afterward, he was lauded for his heroism. His performance at the Battle of Saratoga the next year, in which he was wounded, was undeniably impressive, yet he grew discontented with his lot. He was aggrieved that he was passed over for promotion to major general, though the promotion did come later. He was also outraged that his handling of funds was impugned, leading to him becoming increasingly embittered.

In command of Philadelphia in 1778, he became acquainted with local Loyalist families and married Peggy Shippen, the daughter of a wealthy Loyalist. Arnold had begun to turn from the Patriot cause he had originally espoused and made contact with British agents. His plan to hand over the American stronghold at West Point failed. Arnold escaped capture but his British accomplice, Major John André, was captured by Washington's men and hanged. Now a traitor, Arnold fought his erstwhile comrades on behalf of the British, though he was never trusted. Ever since, to be called a 'Benedict Arnold' in America is to be labelled a traitor.





OPPOSING FORCES







PATRIOTS

Leaders:
 William Campbell,
 Isaac Shelby,
 John Sevier,
 Joseph McDowell,
 Benjamin
 Cleveland, Joseph
 Winston, William
 Chronicle, James
 Williams

Patriot Militia:
 c.900

LOYALISTS

Leaders:
 Major Patrick
 Ferguson

**Loyalist Militia
 and regulars:**
 c.900

BATTLE OF KINGS MOUNTAIN

THE CLASH IN THE STRUGGLE FOR CHARLESTON

WORDS MARC DESANTIS

KINGS MOUNTAIN, SOUTH CAROLINA 7 OCTOBER 1780

It had been a bleak and unhappy 1779 for General Sir Henry Clinton, commander-in-chief of the British forces in North America, who wanted desperately to turn this troublesome conflict over to someone else and go home. Clinton insisted he needed two strong armies in America, not the one “pathetically small army” he actually had, but London had not heeded him and his frustrations had swelled. But now he would strike a powerful blow against the colonial American rebels, or ‘Patriots’, as they called themselves. Sailing from New York Harbor on 26 December 1779 with 8,500 troops in 90 transports, he headed south, his destination being rebel-held Charleston, South Carolina.

In transit, his fleet was hit by an improbable succession of wild storms. Regathering his scattered ships, Clinton made for the port city of Savannah, Georgia, which had fallen to British forces back in 1778. He did not reach it until 1 February. On 11 February, he began landing troops some 48 kilometres to the



■ American Patriots use the environment and their superior rifles to take on Loyalist forces on Kings Mountain

LOYALIST SOLDIERS IN THE REVOLUTION

Many American men armed themselves and fought alongside the British Army

The American War of Independence bore many of the hallmarks of a civil war. Many Americans opposed the idea of separating from Great Britain and remained loyal to King George III. A large (but never large enough) number of these Loyalists were organised into provincial regiments and militia bands to fight on behalf of the crown against the rebelling Patriots. Major Patrick Ferguson, who met his end at Kings Mountain, organised his American Volunteers in the second half of 1779 in New York. The recruits were picked men drawn from several other Loyalist groupings.

Another much more renowned and infamous unit was the British Legion. Raised in July 1778 by Lord Cathcart, it then came under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton the next year. Comprised of infantry and cavalry, every one of the soldiers in the Legion could ride a horse. The British Legion participated in many engagements, including the Siege of Savannah in the early autumn of 1779 and the capture of Charleston, to name just a few. It would end the war at Yorktown in October 1781, where it surrendered to Patriot forces and was interned.

One of the most ferocious of Loyalist regiments in the north was the Westchester Refugees, better known as 'DeLancey's Cowboys'. This unit was formed by the New York Loyalist and former Westchester sheriff James DeLancey, and it conducted a bitter partisan struggle against Patriots in the 'neutral ground' of Westchester County, north of New York City.

The provincial regiments differed from the militia units, which were less formal in organisation. The provincial units were raised from all over the 13 Colonies. Many originated in the region of New York City, the main Loyalist stronghold in America and the headquarters of the British Army.

Militias were raised locally. Following the fall of Charleston, South Carolina, beginning in August 1780, loyal subjects of the king asked to "embody, arm and uniform themselves" into companies of militia for service on behalf of the crown. Altogether, 11 companies totalling some 400 men were raised. Additional militia units were mustered at Camden, South Carolina, and in North Carolina.

Once the war was over, many Loyalists, having experienced continuing friction with their victorious Patriot neighbours, opted to depart the US and settle elsewhere within the vast British Empire. Over 40,000, including soldiers and their families, would make new homes in Canada in the early 1780s as they sought to put the bitter taste of defeat behind them.



■ An engraving showing American patriots parading a captured Loyalist into a town past onlookers in 1776

south of Charleston before advancing on the city. The ensuing siege was carried out slowly but methodically, and eventually Charleston was brought within range of British artillery. On 9 May the bombardment began, and the city capitulated only three days later.

The fall of Charleston on 12 May was an unmitigated disaster for the Patriot cause and a glorious triumph for Clinton. In addition to the 5,000 prisoners taken, the capture also yielded 391 cannon, 6,000 muskets and a gargantuan supply of munitions. With Charleston safely in British hands, Clinton returned to New York in early June. He left behind Lord Charles Cornwallis as the commander of British forces in the American South.

The war in the South

The increased British attention on the South was part of the new strategy to break the stalemate that had settled over the North. With France and Spain now in the conflict on the side of the Americans, London felt it necessary

to safeguard other, perhaps more important British interests in the Caribbean. British strategic attention shifted southward, as did much of its army in the 13 Colonies.

Loyalists in the Carolinas were heartened by the dramatic royal success at Charleston. Coming out of the oppressive Patriot shadow they had long lived under, they encouraged the British to mount a full-scale conquest of the region. They also took the opportunity to exact revenge on the Patriots who had made their lives miserable. The war in the Carolinas, especially in the Back Country region, far inland of the Atlantic coast, took on the character of a civil war, filled with cruelties that only those who had once lived as neighbours can inflict on each other.

Cornwallis' primary task was to secure South Carolina and Georgia for the crown. How he did this was left to his own discretion. He chose not to remain on the defensive but took an active approach. He set up several outposts – at Savannah, Augusta, Cross Creek, Ninety-Six,

Camden, Cheraw, Hanging Rock, Georgetown and Rocky Mount. Each was intended to anchor the region firmly under royal control.

For the time being there was little to stop him. The American presence in South Carolina after the fall of Charleston was meagre: just a single regiment, the Third Virginia Continentals under Colonel Abraham Buford. This was retreating northwards when it was overhauled by pursuing British forces. At the Battle of Waxhaws on 29 May, Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton, the 25-year-old British commander of the British Legion, an American Loyalist regiment, slaughtered the Third Virginia Continentals as they tried to surrender. Many of the Continentals who were killed had already laid down their arms, though Buford escaped.

The massacre was seen as an unforgivable atrocity, and the battle cries of 'Remember Buford' and 'Tarleton's Quarter' echoed among the Patriots who gathered in increasing numbers to fight on. Tarleton himself would become infamous as 'Bloody Ban'.

Back Country

If the 13 Colonies taken together were filled with recalcitrant, liberty-minded rebels bent on separating from Britain, then the Back Country of the Carolinas was one of the red-hot centres of such Patriotic feeling. The intractable nature of the region was due in large part to the kind of people who lived there. The place had been settled by people from England, Scotland and Germany, but most prominent were the immigrants and their descendants from the north of Ireland, known in America as the 'Scotch-Irish'.

Their forefathers had been Presbyterians from the Scottish Lowlands who had been settled in the Plantation of Ulster in the 17th century. They brought with them a martial spirit that had been forged in the fires of constant fighting along the Anglo-Scottish border and then honed further in battles with the Catholic Irish in Ireland. On the American frontier, they then became expert 'Indian fighters' and waged incessant war against the native peoples they encountered there. They were self-reliant, independent and had scant affection for the king or his officials. Most would side with the Patriot cause during the War of Independence.

The partisan civil war shifted into a higher gear. A fierce fight took place at Ramsour's Mill on 20 June, and this was followed by the smashing of a Loyalist camp by Patriots at Williamson Plantation on 12 July. Patriot leader Thomas Sumter next led a force of Patriots against Loyalist-held Rocky Mount on 1 August, where he was repulsed. He then attacked another Loyalist post at Hanging Rock on 6 August and inflicted stinging losses on its garrison. None of these actions were large by European standards, being more akin to skirmishes than battles. But the ferocity of the encounters highlights the bloody nature of the civil war that had engulfed the Carolinas.

The regular Continental Army was not as successful as these Patriot war bands. It had a new commander, General Horatio Gates, the hero of the war-changing American victory at Saratoga in 1777. In the South he would not live up to his reputation. On 16 August 1780, his Continentals clashed with Cornwallis' troops at Camden in South Carolina. Suffering from a collective bout of diarrhoea brought on by partially cooked food and a dose of molasses, his troops were handily routed by Cornwallis, suffering heavy losses.

Major Patrick Ferguson

With the Continental Army dispersed, Cornwallis moved northwards for North Carolina, intending to sweep the region clear of Patriot resistance. One British officer who had been seconded to Cornwallis by Clinton was 36-year-old Major Patrick Ferguson of the 71st Regiment of Foot. Ferguson had lost the use of his arm to a rebel bullet taken at the Battle of the Brandywine in 1777 and had been made inspector of militia by the commander-in-chief before he went back to New York.

The son of a Scottish attorney, Ferguson, like Tarleton, also supported a harder line against Patriot resistance in the Colonies. Unlike Tarleton, he earned a reputation for fair-mindedness and showed a willingness to listen to anyone, though he firmly insisted on the rightness of the crown's cause. Ferguson was tasked with guarding Cornwallis' left (western) flank as the main British army marched towards North Carolina. In addition to his role as flank guard, he was to clear the upland regions of Patriots, a task that would be more easily assigned than fulfilled.

To accomplish his mission, Ferguson raised militia bands from among the Loyalists in the Carolinas. He also had with him his own personal command, the American Volunteers,

"IN ADDITION TO HIS ROLE AS FLANK GUARD, FERGUSON WAS TO CLEAR THE UPLAND REGIONS OF PATRIOTS, A TASK THAT WOULD BE MORE EASILY ASSIGNED THAN FULFILLED"



■ The successful Siege of Charleston in 1778 gave the British a firm platform in South Carolina, but the Battle of Kings Mountain shifted momentum to the Patriot cause

07 THE END

Beaten, Ferguson rejects surrender and launches a hopeless charge against the Patriot riflemen. He is riddled with bullets and slain. The surviving Loyalist troops surrender, and some of them are cut down by vengeful Patriots.

04 CHAOS

The other Patriot divisions under Cleveland, Winston, McDowell, Williams and Chronicle have gotten into position around the northwestern end of the ridge. They too charge uphill. The whole of the ridge is engulfed in chaos.

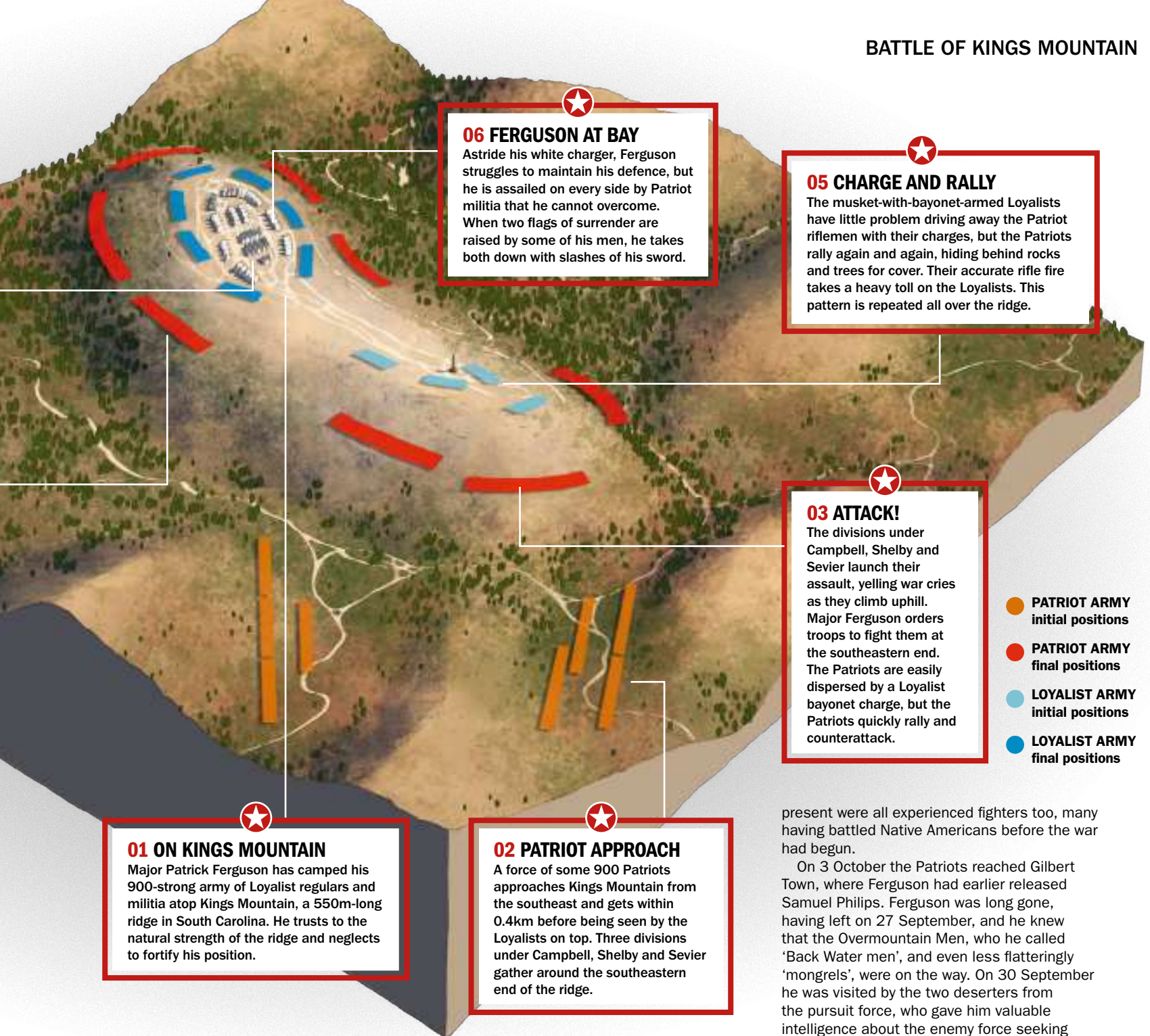
composed of soldiers recruited from other Loyalist regiments in New York and New Jersey.

Another group of rebels had by now come into the picture: the Overmountain Men, so named because they lived largely on the western side of the Blue Ridge Mountains, which were themselves part of the far larger Appalachian mountain range. They had mounted several raids against the British in the Carolinas after the fall of Charleston, answering a call from Colonel Charles McDowell, a North Carolinian commander.

The Mountainmen's leader was Colonel Isaac Shelby, a Kentucky surveyor who had taken up arms to fight the British. He came down from the mountains bringing 200 horsemen with rifles, and together with 300 Georgia militia led by Colonel Elijah Clarke they captured Thicketty Fort on 30 July 1780. After an inconclusive clash at Cedar Spring on 8 August, Shelby and Clarke, with the aid of Colonel James Williams, inflicted heavy losses on a Loyalist force at Musgrove's Mill on 18 August. When word of the Camden fiasco reached them they headed home, with Ferguson trying but failing to catch up with them.

On 10 September, Ferguson released from captivity a rebel by the name of Samuel Philips, who carried a threatening message from Ferguson to Shelby. The Scottish officer had said that if Shelby and the rest did not "desist from their opposition to British arms and take protection under his standard, he [Ferguson] would march his army over the mountains, hang their leader, and lay their country waste with fire and sword". But if Ferguson believed he could intimidate these Overmountain Men then he gravely miscalculated.

Ferguson's warning failed to have the intended effect. Instead, he handed a propaganda coup to the rebels. The 'fire and sword' message quickly made the rounds



06 FERGUSON AT BAY

Astride his white charger, Ferguson struggles to maintain his defence, but he is assailed on every side by Patriot militia that he cannot overcome. When two flags of surrender are raised by some of his men, he takes both down with slashes of his sword.

05 CHARGE AND RALLY

The musket-with-bayonet-armed Loyalists have little problem driving away the Patriot riflemen with their charges, but the Patriots rally again and again, hiding behind rocks and trees for cover. Their accurate rifle fire takes a heavy toll on the Loyalists. This pattern is repeated all over the ridge.

03 ATTACK!

The divisions under Campbell, Shelby and Sevier launch their assault, yelling war cries as they climb uphill. Major Ferguson orders troops to fight them at the southeastern end. The Patriots are easily dispersed by a Loyalist bayonet charge, but the Patriots quickly rally and counterattack.

- PATRIOT ARMY initial positions
- PATRIOT ARMY final positions
- LOYALIST ARMY initial positions
- LOYALIST ARMY final positions

01 ON KINGS MOUNTAIN

Major Patrick Ferguson has camped his 900-strong army of Loyalist regulars and militia atop Kings Mountain, a 550m-long ridge in South Carolina. He trusts to the natural strength of the ridge and neglects to fortify his position.

02 PATRIOT APPROACH

A force of some 900 Patriots approaches Kings Mountain from the southeast and gets within 0.4km before being seen by the Loyalists on top. Three divisions under Campbell, Shelby and Sevier gather around the southeastern end of the ridge.

of the Overmountain folk, who were mostly of Scotch-Irish descent. They came to the conclusion that the best way to defend what mattered to them – hearth, home and loved ones – was to take on Ferguson before he could move against them as he had threatened. So a call was made by Patriot leaders to men on either side of the Blue Ridge Mountains to meet at Sycamore Shoals on the Watauga River by 25 September in what is today the state of Tennessee.

In pursuit of Major Ferguson

The summons brought forth hundreds of hardened frontiersmen willing to fight against the British. Shelby had 240 with him; William McDowell delivered 160 militiamen from North Carolina; John Sevier came with 240 riflemen; while from Virginia came 400 men under William Campbell. Not all of them, of

course, were true Overmountain Men, contrary to legend, but the mountaineers formed the hard core of the miniature army. With the battle cry of 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!', this force of 1,040 riflemen rode off on 26 September from Sycamore Shoals to find Major Ferguson and his Loyalist militia.

The first waypoint was Quaker Meadows in modern North Carolina. Slowed by deep snow as they crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains, they reached it on 30 September and picked up several hundred reinforcements from North and South Carolina. But two of their original number had gone missing and had likely deserted to the British. Ferguson was thus bound to know that they were coming. They also knew that they needed an overall commander and chose to elect William Campbell, an enormous red-haired man of Scottish descent who stood 6.5 feet tall to be their general. The other captains

present were all experienced fighters too, many having battled Native Americans before the war had begun.

On 3 October the Patriots reached Gilbert Town, where Ferguson had earlier released Samuel Philips. Ferguson was long gone, having left on 27 September, and he knew that the Overmountain Men, who he called 'Back Water men', and even less flatteringly 'mongrels', were on the way. On 30 September he was visited by the two deserters from the pursuit force, who gave him valuable intelligence about the enemy force seeking him out. Ferguson sent messengers to his commander, Lord Cornwallis, at Charlotte, North Carolina, asking him to send reinforcements immediately.

Ferguson stayed a step ahead of those following him, going with his men to encamp on 4 October at the plantation of a friendly Loyalist. The leaders of the Overmountain Men were dismayed at having lost the scent of their quarry and decided to take a gamble to catch the elusive major. They took just 700 of their number and mounted them on the best horses. These would ride hard for Cowpens, 34 kilometres to the southeast. They would either run into Ferguson or obtain solid intelligence as to his whereabouts. They could also swing northeast and continue their search.

Coming to Cowpens on 6 October, they ransacked the home of a local Loyalist farmsteader for food, but the man had no knowledge of Ferguson's location. Of some



PATRICK FERGUSON

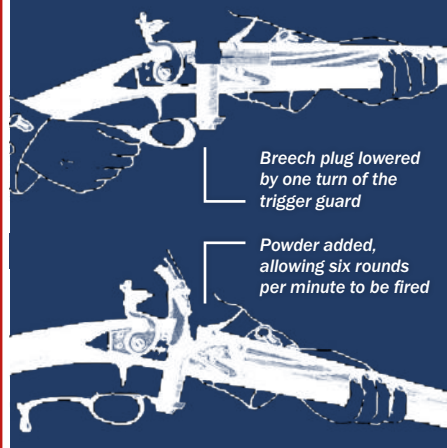
As a soldier and inventor, Ferguson experimented with breech-loading rifles

Perhaps influenced by the extraordinary accuracy of the American frontier rifle, in the 1770s Ferguson had begun to experiment with a new type of breech-loading rifle. Ordinarily, firearms of the day, whether smoothbore muskets or rifles, had to be loaded from the muzzle, and the operator had to stand to do this. A breech-loading rifle promised to be faster to load and could be loaded while prone, leaving the shooter less vulnerable. Also, due to the grooves cut into the inside of the barrel, which imparted a spin to the outgoing bullet, a rifle was much more accurate than a smoothbore musket, which was inaccurate beyond about 70 metres.

A Ferguson rifle could be fired six times a minute, an extraordinary boost in firepower. Ferguson received a patent for his new weapon, which was an improvement on a previous design, as well as an order for 100 copies by the British Army. Coming to America, he and the small corps of sharpshooters he formed saw action at the Battle of Brandywine in 1777. There, he lost the use of his right arm when he was struck in the elbow by a bullet, and his corps was subsequently disbanded. His rifle was never adopted for widespread use by the British.

At Brandywine, Ferguson figured in one of the more fascinating 'what ifs?' of the war. Ferguson spotted a senior American officer, and could have put half a dozen shots into the man, but he had his back turned to Ferguson, who refused to fire. Only after the battle did Ferguson learn, he claimed later, that the officer was General George Washington. There is some doubt as to whether he actually saw Washington, but it is worth pondering how the outcome of the war might have differed had Washington perished that day.

■ Breech mechanism of the Ferguson rifle



consolation was the arrival of 400 trailing men under Colonel James Williams. Ferguson's heading was, however, revealed when a Patriot spy, a crippled man named Joseph Kerr, appeared. Kerr had used his disability to obtain entry into the Loyalist camp under the pretence of finding shelter. He had only recently been with Ferguson's troops and he knew that they were headed for a 550-metre-long, 18-metre-high ridge named Kings Mountain where they planned to make camp.

The Loyalists had done just as Kerr had said and camped atop the foot-shaped ridge. The day before the battle, Ferguson sent another message to Cornwallis requesting reinforcements. "Three or four hundred good soldiers, part dragoons, would finish the business," he assured. Those reinforcements would never come.

Battle of Kings Mountain

To catch up with Ferguson, the Overmountain Men again reduced their force, this time to 940, and put them on their best horses. In this band were 200 riflemen under William Campbell, with another 120 riding with Isaac Shelby; 120 came with John Sevier; 100 with Benjamin Cleveland; 90 followers rode beside Joseph McDowell; and 60 men were with Joseph Winston. There were also 100 South Carolinians led by Edward Lacey and William Hill. This conglomerate force was rounded out by men from Georgia and elsewhere.

Ferguson's force on Kings Mountain was of roughly the same size. He had a small corps of provincial Loyalist regulars, his American

Volunteer regiment. It was composed of picked men drawn from other Loyalist regiments, such as the King's American Rangers, the Queen's Rangers and the New Jersey Volunteers. These were comparable in quality to British regulars. The bulk of his force, however, was made up of 800 militiamen from across the Carolinas. All present, Patriot and Loyalist alike, were from the Colonies, and Ferguson would be the only Briton to take part in the battle.

There was, however, one major difference between the Patriots and the Loyalists, and that was in how they were armed. Ferguson's men carried the ubiquitous 'Brown Bess' smoothbore musket. For close quarters, their muskets were fitted with bayonets. The Overmountain Men and their comrades were equipped with the accurate American frontier rifle, which could not accept a bayonet.

The Patriots began their approach march to Kings Mountain at 8pm and rode through the night and the rain-soaked morning. They arrived at their destination at 3pm on 7 October, the sound of their march muffled by the sodden leaves that lay on the damp earth. The Patriots came up from the direction of the 55-metre-wide southeastern heel of the foot-shaped ridge and closed to within half a kilometre before they were spotted. Colonel Shelby's men formed a column in the centre. On their immediate right were the men with Campbell and Sevier. Further to the right were Winston and McDowell's militia. To the left of Shelby came a long column of militia, with men following Major William Chronicle in the lead and those of Cleveland and Williams behind.

■ Though defeated, Ferguson would not countenance surrender and died in a hail of Patriot bullets

“FERGUSON RACED FROM POSITION TO POSITION, GUIDING HIS SOLDIERS WITH BLASTS ON HIS WHISTLE”

The Overmountain Men began their war-whoop, which they had learned from the Native Americans they so often fought. The Loyalists, with their main camp at the 110-metre-wide northwestern end of the ridge, were now alert, and drums called the men to arms. Ferguson and Captain Abraham de Peyster, a New Yorker of Huguenot ancestry and the second-in-command, set about putting their men into fighting formation. “This is ominous,” de Peyster said to Ferguson, noting the unsettling rebel war cries. Ferguson ordered some of his men to form a three-sided square at the southeastern heel of the ridge, and they unloaded volleys into the oncoming Patriots.

The Overmountain Men were not easily turned aside and used their frontier-honed skills to hide behind rocks, ravines and trees. With their rifles and superb marksmanship, they returned fire with lethal effect. Ferguson had his men launch a bayonet charge, causing the bayonet-less Patriots to give way and head back down the slope of the ridge.

Campbell rallied his men and they fired on the Loyalists as they made their way back up the slope. Shelby rallied his militia also, and these too fired on the Loyalists. Three bayonet charges were made against the Patriots, each successfully knocking them down the slopes, but on each occasion the Patriots returned to the fight, shooting at the Loyalists as they retreated. Ferguson’s decision not to build earthworks to protect his troops had come back to haunt him. Perhaps he had trusted the trees to provide protection, but these ironically offered excellent cover to the skirmishing Patriot militiamen. The Patriots held one other advantage: the Loyalists were on higher ground and so their shots tended to miss high as they fired down upon the advancing Patriots.

Ferguson raced from position to position on the ridgetop, guiding his soldiers with blasts on his silver whistle. His task was nearly hopeless,

as he was being assailed from as many as eight different directions. While Campbell, Shelby and Sevier’s men held his attention in the southeast, the other Patriot groups under Cleveland, Chronicle, McDowell, Winston and Williams had worked their way around and begun their own attacks uphill.

The pattern of charge and counterattack repeated itself on all sides of Kings Mountain. Captain Alexander Chesney, a Loyalist officer from South Carolina, would write afterwards that this sequence continued “for near an hour, the mountaineers flying when there was danger of being charged by the bayonet, and returning again as soon as the British detachment had faced about to repel another of their parties”.

By now the Patriots held the heel of the ridge. In a last-ditch defence of his camp on the opposite, northwestern end, Ferguson had his remaining men form a square. These were hammered by the fire of the surging American riflemen, and their ranks began to falter. Ferguson refused even the thought of capitulation. When two of his men raised flags of surrender he cut them down immediately with his sword. He would never “yield to such damned banditti”, he cried. With a handful of men and his sword in hand, he made a hopeless charge into the teeth of the Patriot riflemen. He was hit several times and fell dead from his white charger before being pulled away with his foot caught in his stirrup.

With Ferguson dead, Captain de Peyster raised a white flag to signal his surrender and asked for quarter for his men. For a while the Patriots, their blood up, vented their hatred and anger on the battered Loyalists, yelling ‘Tarleton’s quarter’ as they took their vengeance. It required some effort on the part of the rebel captains to stop their men from butchering the defeated enemy.

“Ferguson and his party are no more in circumstances to injure the citizens of America,” William Campbell would report days later. Loyalist losses were far heavier than those incurred by the Patriots. Including their commander, they suffered 157 killed and 163 wounded. 698 were taken prisoner. Of the Patriots, 28 were slain, including Colonel James Williams and Major William Chronicle, and 64 were wounded. In an ugly denouement, nine of the Loyalists were hanged after a hurried trial by vindictive Patriots. Many of the prisoners would escape the custody of their captors not long after the battle.

Notwithstanding Major Ferguson himself, the Battle of Kings Mountain was the largest all-American engagement of the war, and the ferocity with which it was fought was a testament to the hard feelings unleashed when neighbour fought against neighbour in the civil war-like conditions in the Carolinas.

Though the forces involved were tiny, the outcome had an outsized impact on the war. It lifted Patriot morale after the dark months following Charleston, and it also marked the end for the Loyalist cause in the Back Country. Strategically, it forced Cornwallis to halt his move into North Carolina and march back to South Carolina. When he returned months later the Continental Army had recovered. The campaign would now be much harder for him, ending in defeat at Yorktown in 1781.

Shelby, Campbell and Sevier took up positions at the southeastern end of the ridge, while the rest of the men surrounded the Loyalists.

The Patriots began their climb up the ridge, with each group going for the top. Though Ferguson’s troops on top of Kings Mountain had the advantage of higher ground, he had not ordered them to improve their position with field fortifications. This was a terrible oversight, since the existence of even elementary defences would have made the Patriots’ task all the harder. Campbell’s men were the first to the summit. “Here they are!” Campbell shouted. “Shoot like hell and fight like devils!”



■ Angered by Major Ferguson’s threat to bring “fire and sword” against them, the men on the western side of the Blue Ridge Mountains gathered at Sycamore Shoals before heading off for a showdown with the major

SIEGE OF YORKTOWN

THE BATTLE THAT LED TO THE END OF THE REVOLUTION

WORDS DAVID SMITH

YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA 28 SEPTEMBER – 17 OCTOBER 1781

Yorktown, the decisive victory of the American War of Independence, has been viewed as a stunning upset. The defeat of the mighty British Army at the hands of the inexperienced Americans is either a miraculous triumph or an abject humiliation, depending on your viewpoint. Yet the Siege of Yorktown was a battle that emphasised the monumental task facing Britain in attempting to subdue a rebellion in colonies nearly 5,000 kilometres from its own shores, while simultaneously fending off French, Spanish and even Dutch forces.

It was an outnumbered British army that found itself penned in at Yorktown and, more importantly, it was an outmanoeuvred one. It was also, at the critical moment, deprived of support from the Royal Navy, which had



previously ruled the waves along the American seaboard, offering both supply and a safe retreat for any British force near the coast.

The southern strategy

French intervention in the war, following the defeat of another British army at Saratoga in 1777, was expected to dramatically tip the scales in America's favour. The French could provide experienced soldiers, but naval support was far more important – in the first two campaigns of the war, British generals had been able to take for granted total superiority at sea.

But the French had been unable to make a decisive impact in the colonies, preferring to concentrate efforts in the West Indies, where lucrative territories seemed ripe for picking while Britain was distracted with the American war.

The British had therefore been able to regroup after the shock of Saratoga and refocus efforts in the southern colonies, capturing Charleston in May 1780 and then annihilating the last rebel army in the south at Camden the following August. When General Charles, Earl Cornwallis, took his army into North Carolina and then Virginia in 1781, it looked like his aggressive leadership might finally subdue the south.

British intentions were to destroy any organised resistance in the southern colonies and then leave local peace-keeping in the hands of loyalist forces while Cornwallis' army moved on to pacify the next area. It was a promising strategy, but Cornwallis' army was small – only around 3,000 men – and his insistence on rapid movement meant loyalists were not given enough time to firmly establish themselves

before the comforting presence of the redcoats was removed.




Moreover, American commanders were learning how to handle the British. At the Battle of Guilford Courthouse on 15 March 1781, the Americans offered a defence in depth and Cornwallis was forced to expend one-quarter of his men for victory. Strategically, it was a disaster. The American commander, Nathanael Greene, then started to move his men back towards South Carolina, but Cornwallis had no appetite to follow and instead marched to link up with a small force, under the command of the infamous American turncoat Benedict Arnold, on the Chesapeake.

Greene would go on to prise one British garrison after another out of their strongholds in South Carolina, undoing all of the good work of





■ The French and British lines meet during the Battle of the Chesapeake. Although tactically a draw, it left the French in command of the seas off Yorktown

OPPOSING FORCES		
	vs	
BRITAIN		USA
Leader: Earl Cornwallis		Leader: George Washington
Infantry: 8,000 (including Hessians & loyalists)		Infantry: 8,000 (including militia)
Cavalry: 400		Cavalry: 100
Artillery: 85		Artillery: 60
		
		FRANCE
		Leader: Comte de Rochambeau
		Infantry: 12,000 (including sailors)
		Cavalry: 300
		Artillery: 90

the preceding year. Cornwallis, meanwhile, was firmly on course for his fateful date with destiny at Yorktown.

The road to Yorktown

The British forces under Cornwallis were some of the most experienced in the colonies. Hardened by campaigning, they made up a small but tough army. The problem was that combat and disease – especially since the war had shifted to the south – had whittled away their numbers. After linking up with Arnold's force, Cornwallis still had just over 8,000 men under his command.

With garrison troops dotted across the British-held territory, Cornwallis' army was the last mobile force Britain could deploy, and he still had ambitions of continuing his costly offensive: he saw the south as the only sensible region to pursue an active war. "If we mean an offensive war in America, we must abandon New York and bring our whole force into Virginia," Cornwallis wrote in a letter. "If our plan is defensive... let us quit the Carolinas."

After joining with Arnold in May, orders were received from the British commander-in-chief in New York, Sir Henry Clinton. He favoured an offensive move into Pennsylvania but he was against further operations in Virginia. If Cornwallis did not want to move into Pennsylvania, he was to hunker down in a favourable defensive spot. The spots mentioned were Williamsburg and Yorktown.

The British command structure was fractured at this point. Clinton felt unable to control Cornwallis and was unsure in his own mind about what to do. He saw the value of a sizeable army in the south, but he was also worried that a combined French-American force might be moving on New York. In reality, Britain was simply running out of men to both hold existing territory and threaten new areas.

By August, Cornwallis, who was in a rather deflated state of mind, was constructing defences at Yorktown (he also occupied and fortified the small village of Gloucester, across the York River). It was against his natural aggressive instincts, and his mood was not improved when a sizeable French fleet appeared off the coast at the end of the month. The noose was tightening.

The French and Americans were already scenting an opportunity, but in order to trap Cornwallis they would need to pull off something remarkable. The American commander-in-chief, George Washington, was in the north along with a French force under the comte de Rochambeau. A small French fleet was based at Rhode Island, while the largest French fleet was in the West Indies. Pulling these disparate forces together would be, in the words of historian William B Willcox, "as complicated and brilliant a combined operation as the eighteenth century witnessed."

The crucial element would be naval forces, but it was far from certain that the French would deliver in this department. The French fleet Cornwallis spotted off the coast on 31 August was commanded by the comte de Grasse. It was a powerful force of 27 warships – far more than anticipated by the British naval commander in the West Indies, Admiral George Brydges Rodney. De Grasse had confounded expectations to send such a large fleet north. Originally ordered only to cooperate with the Spanish in the West Indies, he discovered they had no plans for operations and so offered his services to Rochambeau and Washington. Even then, it was expected that he would send only half of his fleet northward, reserving the rest to escort French trade ships back to Europe.

Instead, de Grasse took the bold step of suspending the trade fleet and moving north with 27 ships of the line. Rodney expected him to send 14 and so detached just 14 of his own ships of the line to chase the French vessels.

De Grasse's fleet also carried two valuable commodities – 3,000 French troops borrowed from Santo Domingo and a chest of Spanish

gold, which would pay American troops and keep them in the field. The first piece of the French-American puzzle was falling into place. They would have naval superiority at Yorktown.

On 19 August, French and American troops on the Hudson began to move southward. Clinton was convinced they could not be heading for the Chesapeake, believing the climate to be too oppressive for offensive operations at that time of year. Instead, he feared a move on Staten Island and conferred with the commander of the British fleet that was based at New York, Admiral Thomas Graves.

Even when intelligence arrived that de Grasse was heading north with a large fleet, it was still believed he was aiming for New York. It was part of an extensive series of missed opportunities for the British. The 14-ship squadron sent by Rodney to chase de Grasse actually overhauled the larger French fleet (the British ships had copper bottoms, which helped them cut through the water more easily), arriving at Yorktown a full five days before the French ships. The commander, Admiral Samuel Hood, believed the French must have already passed through on their way to New York, so he moved off again rather than staying.

Whether he could have fended off 27 French ships is a big question, but there may have been a chance of staging some sort of effective defence. Hood may also have had a chance of evacuating Cornwallis's army, but the army was not considered to be under threat. If Graves had thought to move his force of six ships to the south, he could have linked up with Hood and faced de Grasse's ships with genuine hopes of success in battle.

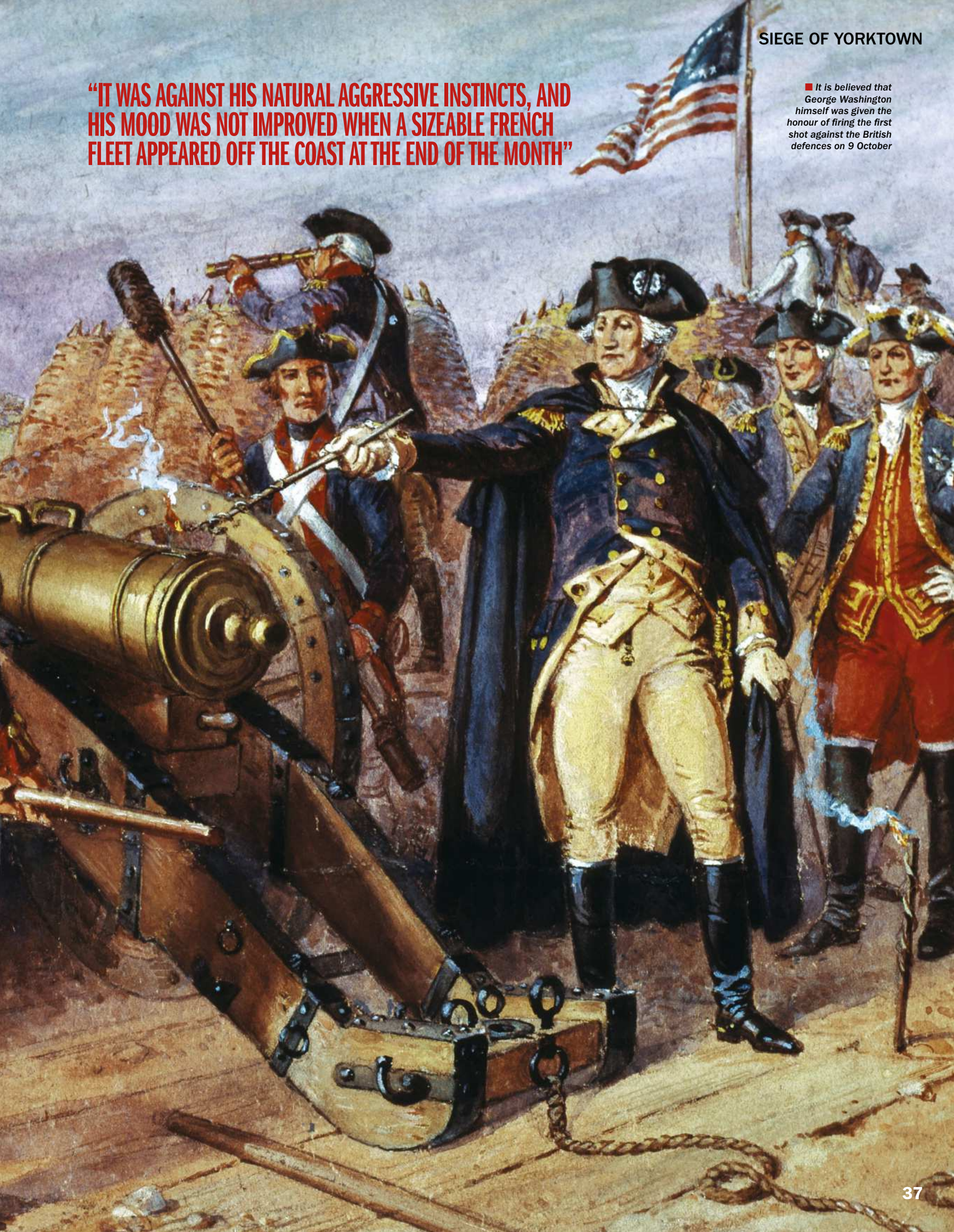
Neither option was taken, leaving de Grasse in command of the coast when he arrived at the end of August, but all was not yet lost for the British. Hood continued to New York, joined forces with Graves and headed back to the south. On 5 September the two fleets met, with 19 British vessels facing 24 French ships, which headed out for the engagement.

In an inconclusive encounter, both fleets suffered serious damage to five of their ships, but the British came off worst, with HMS Shrewsbury, Intrepid, Ajax, Alcide and Terrible all nearly put out of action. HMS Terrible, which had been struggling to remain seaworthy even

"THE BRITISH FORCES UNDER CORNWALLIS WERE SOME OF THE MOST EXPERIENCED IN THE COLONIES. HARDENED BY CAMPAIGNING, THEY MADE UP A SMALL BUT TOUGH ARMY"

"IT WAS AGAINST HIS NATURAL AGGRESSIVE INSTINCTS, AND HIS MOOD WAS NOT IMPROVED WHEN A SIZEABLE FRENCH FLEET APPEARED OFF THE COAST AT THE END OF THE MONTH"

■ It is believed that George Washington himself was given the honour of firing the first shot against the British defences on 9 October



before the battle, had to be burned a few days later. Even worse for the British fleet, de Grasse led them away from the mouth of the Chesapeake, allowing the smaller French fleet from Rhode Island to safely make it into the river. It was 12 September before Graves could send a ship to look into the Chesapeake to take stock of the situation. The reinforced French fleet made further action impossible and Graves limped back to New York to refit.

Cornwallis outnumbered

The French fleet from Rhode Island not only tipped the scales decisively at sea; it also brought a siege train of heavy cannon with which to attack Yorktown. Two days after Graves left Cornwallis to his fate, that fate began to take shape in the form of the combined American and French army under Washington and Rochambeau. The first units reached Williamsburg, near Yorktown, on 14 September and Washington continued to gather and organise his force for the next two weeks.

Cornwallis was pondering an attack on the army penning him in at Yorktown. He was on the verge of authorising a desperate breakout attempt when a letter arrived from Clinton on 14 September, full of optimism about a potential relief effort. Admiral Robert Digby was on his way from Britain with ships and reinforcements. Together with the fleet already in place at New York, it would add up to a force strong enough to evacuate Cornwallis. This hopeful vision swayed Cornwallis, and he called off his planned offensive.

It was to prove a disastrous mistake, and the last window of opportunity had already closed. Washington began moving on Yorktown on 28 September, and his men began to draw up opposite the British defensive works the following day. With around 6,000 Continental troops and thousands of Virginia militia, Washington was more than a match for Cornwallis's bedraggled army, which was already suffering badly from camp sicknesses, most notably malaria. The 4,000 French troops with Rochambeau joined the 3,000 from de Grasse's fleet, as well as 5,000 sailors released for service on land, to make the allies' numerical advantage even more decisive than it already was.

The problem facing the British was serious. Siege works tended to follow a remorseless pattern, and unless a serious mistake was made by the besieging army, it usually ended in capitulation. A series of 'parallels' would be constructed – trenches running parallel to the defensive works. The first would provide cover for the next parallel, which would be closer to the target.

Cornwallis knew exactly how relentless the progress of a siege could be, having taken part in the capture of Charleston the previous year. His only hope was to delay the advance of the parallel trenches until he could be rescued by Clinton. This could be achieved by his own artillery, and by launching sorties from his lines to disrupt the allies' work. His next move was therefore puzzling.

On the morning of 29 September, Washington was shocked to find that Cornwallis had evacuated his outer line during the night. The

"HE WAS ON THE VERGE OF AUTHORISING A DESPERATE BREAKOUT ATTEMPT"

To Williamsburg

03 THE NET CLOSES

Having gathered his army at Williamsburg following a long journey from New York, Washington marches on Yorktown on 28 September. His arrival gives the allies a decisive advantage in numbers as well as total control of the sea.

01 CORNWALLIS ARRIVES AT YORKTOWN

Advised by Henry Clinton to take up a defensive position at either Williamsburg or Yorktown, Cornwallis moves his small and battered army into the town. Sickness is already beginning to thin the ranks.

Goosley Road

Hampton Road

French Grand Battery

"SIEGE WORKS TENDED TO FOLLOW A REMORSELESS PATTERN, AND UNLESS A SERIOUS MISTAKE WAS MADE BY THE BESIEGING ARMY, IT USUALLY ENDED IN CAPITULATION"

Fusiliers' Redoubt

04 CORNWALLIS ABANDONS HIS OUTER LINE

Feeling that his weakened army is not up to the task of manning three kilometres of works, Cornwallis abandons the outer defensive line during the night of 29 September and occupies the much more compact defences around Yorktown itself.

Gloucester Point

08 THE ESCAPE ATTEMPT

During the night of 16 October, Cornwallis attempts to evacuate his army in 16 vessels. Three trips are needed, but only one is completed before bad weather intervenes and the escape is called off. The following morning, Cornwallis surrenders.

02 THE BATTLE OF THE CHESAPEAKE

Although tactically a draw, the naval engagement off the coast of Yorktown on 5 September is a strategic disaster for the British, who leave the French in control of the sea and head back to New York to refit.

06 ASSAULT ON REDOUBTS NINE AND TEN

Cornwallis anticipated that this sector would be chosen for the assault on Yorktown and had placed two redoubts in advance of his inner line for added protection. However, both fall in a single night to determined attacks from French and American troops. The capture of the redoubts allows Washington to complete his second parallel.

07 THE LAST RESISTANCE

A futile and largely symbolic sortie is led by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Abercrombie on the morning of 16 October. Light infantry and grenadiers under his command manage to spike several French guns, but they are back in action within hours.

05 THE FIRST PARALLEL

With the guidance of experienced French engineers and the legendary Prussian officer Baron von Steuben, the allied army completes its first parallel and has artillery in place by 9 October. The bombardment of the British defences commences.

- BRITISH UNIT
- HESSIAN UNIT
- FRENCH UNIT
- AMERICAN UNIT



Map: Rocio Espin

■ Cornwallis faces up to the enormity of his failure, surrendering his army to the combined French-American force



extensive works, including several formidable redoubts, might have held the Americans at bay for some time, but Cornwallis felt he did not have enough men to hold it against such superior numbers. His much shorter interior line would therefore be called upon. The decision has been criticised and certainly shortened the siege by a few days at the very least, but with something like 3,000 men out of action with serious illness, Cornwallis obviously felt as though he had no choice.

There was also the matter of another letter from Clinton, which arrived that night and talked of a relief effort, including 5,000 men, leaving New York by 5 October. Cornwallis believed he had to hold out for just a few more days.

The siege opens

The inner line would still present an obstacle. Two redoubts protected Yorktown's right flank, with three guarding the left. Three more sat at the rear of the town to cover the coast. By far the most important, however, were two further redoubts in front of the left flank, redoubts Nine and Ten. A more substantial position, known as the 'Fusiliers' Redoubt', was retained, well in advance of the right flank, and was supported by Royal Navy ships in the York River.

Cornwallis had managed to scrape together 65 pieces of artillery, including some scavenged from the navy, and he arranged these in 14 batteries through his defensive works – there were 20 more cannon in the Gloucester defences. They would make life uncomfortable for the American and French soldiers constructing their approaches, but the biggest guns at his disposal were comparatively weak 18-pounders. Once Washington had his batteries erected, he would be able to aim 24-pounders at the British works. It would be a hopeless mismatch.

Skirmishing broke out in front of the Fusiliers' Redoubt as the Americans quickly took possession of the outer perimeter and probed forward, and the infamous light cavalry commander Banastre Tarleton led a raid that carried off the American officer Alexander Scammell, but this was little more than sparring. The real work was yet to begin.

“HE DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH MEN TO HOLD AGAINST SUCH SUPERIOR NUMBERS”

The French engineers with Washington knew their trade, so Cornwallis would normally have started to launch sorties as soon as siege works began. Instead, he remained surprisingly passive. British artillery raged at the men converting the outer defensive perimeter into an offensive platform, but no sorties were launched. Perhaps Cornwallis would do more as the Americans came closer – the outer defensive line was about 0.8 kilometres from the inner works.

The British bombardment caused few casualties but did impede building on the lines because every time the Americans saw a muzzle flash they took cover. The British, already running low on ammunition, began to ignite powder in the muzzles of their guns to simulate shots. The effect on the American soldiers was much the same, but a precious cannonball was not wasted.

Early October also saw the last serious move by the British, with Tarleton leading a raid from Gloucester, in which he fought an inconclusive battle with French light cavalry and infantry. It was to be the last act of one of the most controversial figures of the entire war, as the French then bottled him up with the rest of the British garrison at Gloucester.



Two more allied batteries opened up on 11 October, and Cornwallis was becoming desperate. "Nothing but a direct move to York River, which includes a successful naval action, can save me," he informed Clinton.

The second parallel

The construction of the second parallel brought defeat closer for the British. The allies had now advanced as close as 180 metres from the British lines.

Another German soldier noted the scene in Yorktown: "One saw men lying nearly everywhere, who were mortally wounded and whose heads, arms, and legs had been shot off. Also one saw wounded continually dragged and carried down by the water."

In order to complete the second parallel, however, redoubts Nine and Ten needed to be captured. With more and more British guns out of action, the artillery duel had become one-sided, and Washington now pummelled the two redoubts for three days in preparation for an assault. Redoubt Nine held around 120 men, Hessians and British, while Redoubt Ten held around 70. Washington decided to attack during the night of 14 October.

The redoubts were strongly constructed and protected by fraise work (sharpened stakes) and abatis (chopped down trees with their branches sharpened and facing the enemy). They were no match, however, for a determined assault. A force of 400 American light infantry was allocated Redoubt Ten, with 400 French troops tackling Nine.

The noise of axes at work alerted the garrison of Redoubt Ten – the Americans were cutting

their way through the abatis that protected the position. Hand grenades hurled by the British inflicted some casualties but they were quickly overwhelmed by the onrushing Americans, who charged with unloaded muskets. It had cost Washington just nine dead and 31 injured to capture the position and all the redcoats in it.

Redoubt Nine inflicted a much heavier toll on the attackers than the others. Held up by the abatis, the French suffered badly from musket fire from the garrison before they could make their numbers tell. The attackers lost 15 killed and 77 wounded, and just over half of the garrison escaped, although 18 were killed and 50 taken prisoner.

The two redoubts were quickly absorbed into the second parallel, plunging Cornwallis into despair. "The safety of the place is therefore so precarious," he wrote to Clinton, "that I cannot recommend that the fleet and army should run great risk in endeavouring to save us."

Perhaps aware that his passivity in the face of the allied advance might be questioned, Cornwallis organised a symbolic sortie during the early hours of 16 October, and then tried a desperate evacuation of Yorktown. Bad weather foiled this last attempt to escape the carefully laid trap he had found himself in, and on the following morning Cornwallis surrendered.

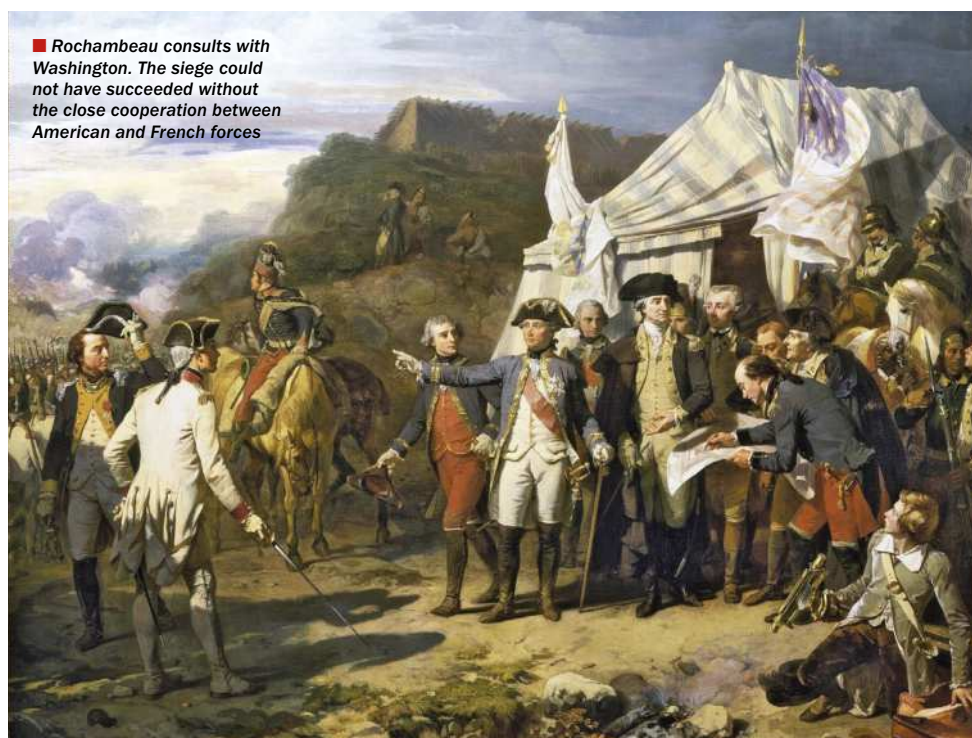
The last offensive force the British had in the field had been eliminated. Legend has it that the band played 'The World Turned Upside Down' as the garrison marched out to lay down its arms. This is debated (some claim there were no musicians in Cornwallis's army), but a more apt tune could hardly have been chosen. The American War of Independence was all but lost.

"IT WAS TO BE THE LAST ACT OF ONE OF THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL FIGURES OF THE ENTIRE WAR, AS THE FRENCH THEN BOTTLED HIM UP WITH THE REST OF THE BRITISH GARRISON AT GLOUCESTER"

On 7 October, Cornwallis surveyed the land in front of his lines to see that the Americans had begun work on their first parallel, to the front of his left flank. A second, diversionary trench had been dug in front of the Fusiliers' Redoubt, where the 23rd Regiment was based. The Americans started to construct batteries in the first parallel, but still Cornwallis did not launch raids against them. By 9 October, the allies were ready to start bombarding of the British line.

It proved to be spectacular. "We could find no refuge in or out of town," wrote one of the German troops with Cornwallis. "The people fled to the waterside and hid in hastily contrived shelters on the banks, but many of them were killed by bursting bombs." Cornwallis' headquarters were destroyed and he resorted to holding staff meetings in a cave from that point.

The following day Cornwallis heard from Clinton again. The relief effort was now not anticipated to leave New York before 12 October. Cornwallis had been expecting its imminent arrival. As more American and French batteries became serviceable throughout the day, the bombardment of Yorktown increased in severity. HMS Charon was struck by heated shot, caught fire and sank, and the British artillery was steadily silenced as guns were hit.



■ Rochambeau consults with Washington. The siege could not have succeeded without the close cooperation between American and French forces

BATTLE OF WABASH

LITTLE TURTLE'S ARMY LAUNCHED A SURPRISE ATTACK ON AN AMERICAN ARMY SENT TO PUNISH HIS TRIBE

WORDS WILLIAM E WELSH

FORT RECOVERY, OHIO, USA 4 NOVEMBER 1791

The warriors of the Western Confederacy crept silently along the ground towards the American camp on the banks of the Wabash River. Their faces were painted red and black to frighten their foes and protect them in battle. They clutched hatchets and tomahawks, as well as bows and muskets. When they received the signal to attack, they raced, whooping and shouting, at their enemies. Taken by surprise, terrified militiamen splashed through the stream into the main camp, where regulars and volunteers were scrambling to repulse the onslaught.

The Native Americans attacking on 4 November 1791 belonged to the Western Confederacy. The loose alliance of tribes living in the Northwest Territory had allied itself with the British during the American Revolutionary War and although the British had made peace with the new United States in 1783, the tribes continued to fight. In the years following the treaty, they conducted frequent raids against settlers along the north bank of the Ohio River in an effort to discourage settlement.

In a bid to pacify the hostile tribes, American president George Washington ordered the territory's governor, Scottish-born Revolutionary War veteran Arthur St Clair, to lead a large force north from Fort Washington, near the present-day city of Cincinnati. Since the US Army had very few troops, Major General St Clair would have to enlist volunteers for the expedition. His objective was to subdue the Miami tribe living along the Wabash River in what is now eastern Indiana.

St Clair's 2,300 troops set out in early September. They stopped twice to build stockades that would serve as forward supply depots, christening these forts Hamilton and Jefferson. The fort-building interlude consumed an entire month. They resumed their march on 4 October, hacking out a road for their artillery and baggage train.

St Clair's army consisted of two battalions of regulars, two battalions of six-month volunteers, and Kentucky militia. Although the battalions were led by former officers of the Continental Army, the volunteers were green.

As St Clair's troops headed deeper into the wilderness, they were shadowed by scouts

dispatched by Miami chief Mihšihkinaahkwa, known to the Americans as Little Turtle, who was one of the Confederacy's principal military leaders. Little Turtle, with the assistance of Shawnee war chief Weyapiersenwah, known as Blue Jacket, assembled upwards of 2,000 warriors to crush the invaders.

A combination of factors, including desertions, discharges and sickness, reduced St Clair's army to 1,400 troops by the time it bivouacked on 3 November on the eastern branch of the Wabash River. The main camp occupied by the regulars and volunteers was on one side of the branch, with the smaller militia camp on the other side of the branch. St Clair failed to entrench or post sentries.

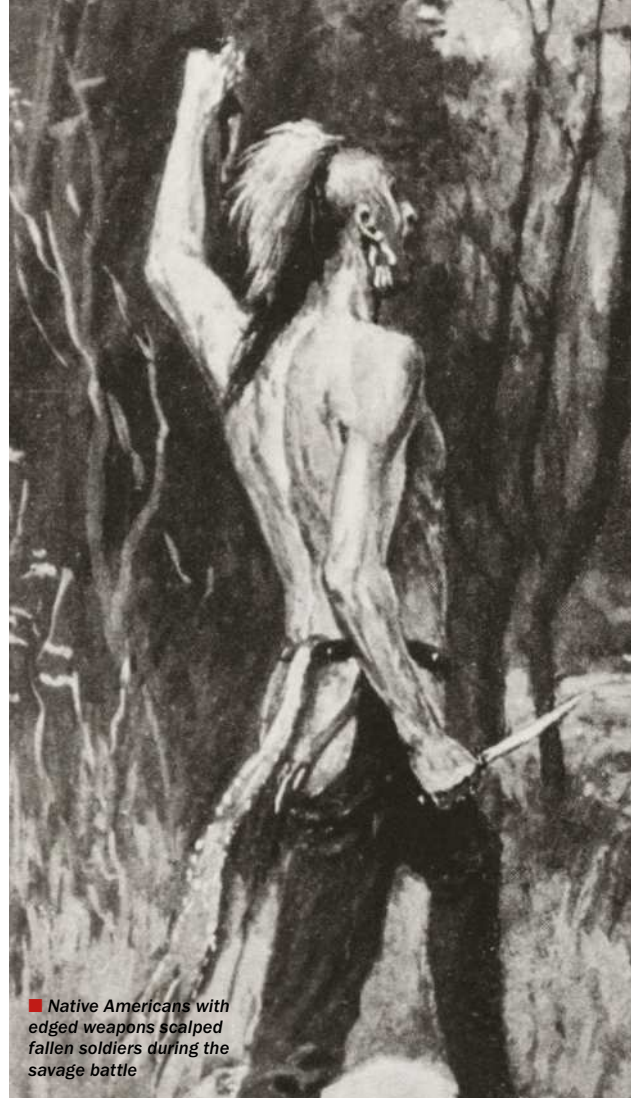
The surprise attack at dawn caught both camps by complete surprise. The Americans' eight guns were deployed in two separate positions. The warriors quickly encircled the main camp. Little Turtle's sharpshooters then began slowly picking off the cannons in order to silence the field guns.

Lieutenant Colonel William Darke, in charge of the left wing, launched two bayonet charges in an attempt to break up the attack. The veteran warriors allowed the attackers to punch through their lines before they attempted to isolate and destroy the piecemeal attacks.

After three hours of hard fighting, the Confederacy's warriors had slain half of St Clair's command. St Clair, who rallied his men throughout the ordeal, had his horse shot from under him on three occasions.

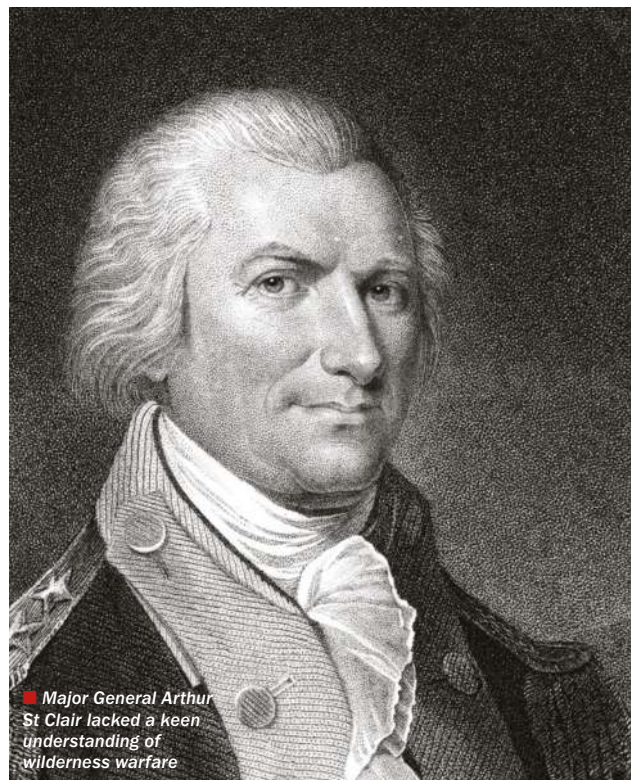
Realising his army was on the verge of annihilation, St Clair ordered a retreat to Fort Jefferson, which lay nearly 48 kilometres away. Many of the soldiers threw away their muskets and equipment as they fled in terror through the woods. The bodies of the slain were not recovered until January 1792.

The Americans suffered 632 killed and 264 wounded. Although exact figures are not known for the Confederacy's losses, they were estimated at 20 killed and 50 wounded. St Clair's Defeat, as the battle is often called, was the greatest loss suffered in battle by the US Army in a pitched battle with Native Americans, surpassing the Battle of Little Bighorn in 1876. Washington forced St Clair to resign in the

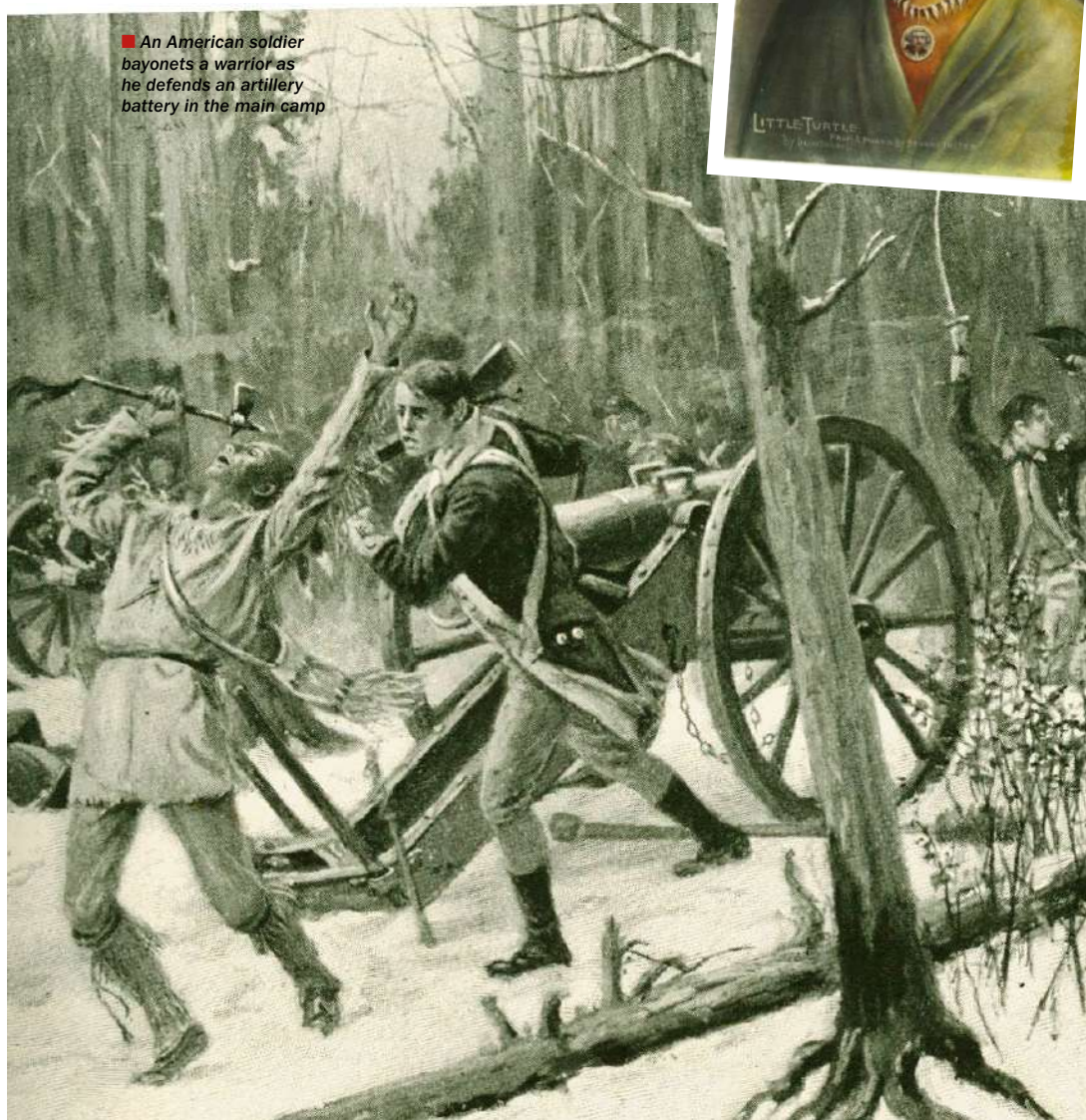
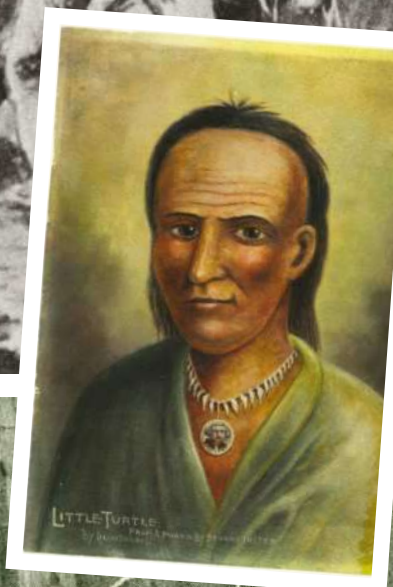


Native Americans with edged weapons scalped fallen soldiers during the savage battle

wake of the debacle, and Congress held hearings that revealed that the army had undertaken the expedition with scant training and faulty equipment. Winthrop Sargent, a survivor who was wounded twice during the fight, made a chilling prophesy afterwards: "The fortunes of this day... will blacken a whole page in the future annals of America."



Major General Arthur St Clair lacked a keen understanding of wilderness warfare



■ An American soldier bayonets a warrior as he defends an artillery battery in the main camp

DEATH IN THE DARK WOODS

‘Mad’ Anthony Wayne trained an elite force whose decisive victory over the multi-tribal coalition forced it to concede defeat

In the wake of St Clair's Defeat, President George Washington appointed Major General ‘Mad’ Anthony Wayne as commander in chief of the US Army forces in the Northwest Territory in March 1792. The native Pennsylvanian's experience fighting Loyalists and their Creek and Cherokee allies in 1782 during the American Revolution had given him a keen insight into Native American tactics.

Wayne spent two years moulding an elite legion. In spring 1794, he led his 2,000 men on an offensive against the same foe that had thumped St Clair. The two sides faced off on 20 August. Little Turtle and Blue Jacket deployed their 1,500 warriors in a strong position in a tangled nest of fallen trees to await the American attack. Meanwhile, Wayne choreographed an impressive attack in what became known as the Battle of Fallen Timbers. While his foot soldiers charged the enemy repeatedly with their bayonets, his cavalry attacked it from behind. The enemy fled in defeat.

Afterwards, Wayne's army systematically torched the villages of the hostile tribes. After failing to get help from the British, the warring chiefs made peace with the Americans. The Treaty of Greenville, signed in 1795, required them to relinquish ownership of most of their lands to Americans for settlement.



■ Major General ‘Mad’ Anthony Wayne led the Americans to victory over the Western Confederacy at the Battle of Fallen Timbers



THE 1800s

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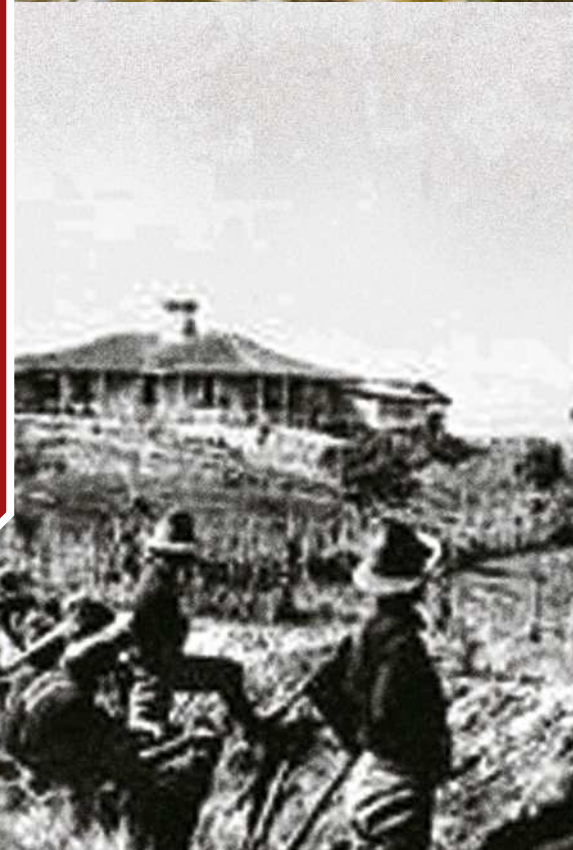
Find out the truth about Custer's last stand against the Lakota Sioux and Cheyenne tribes in the Plains Wars

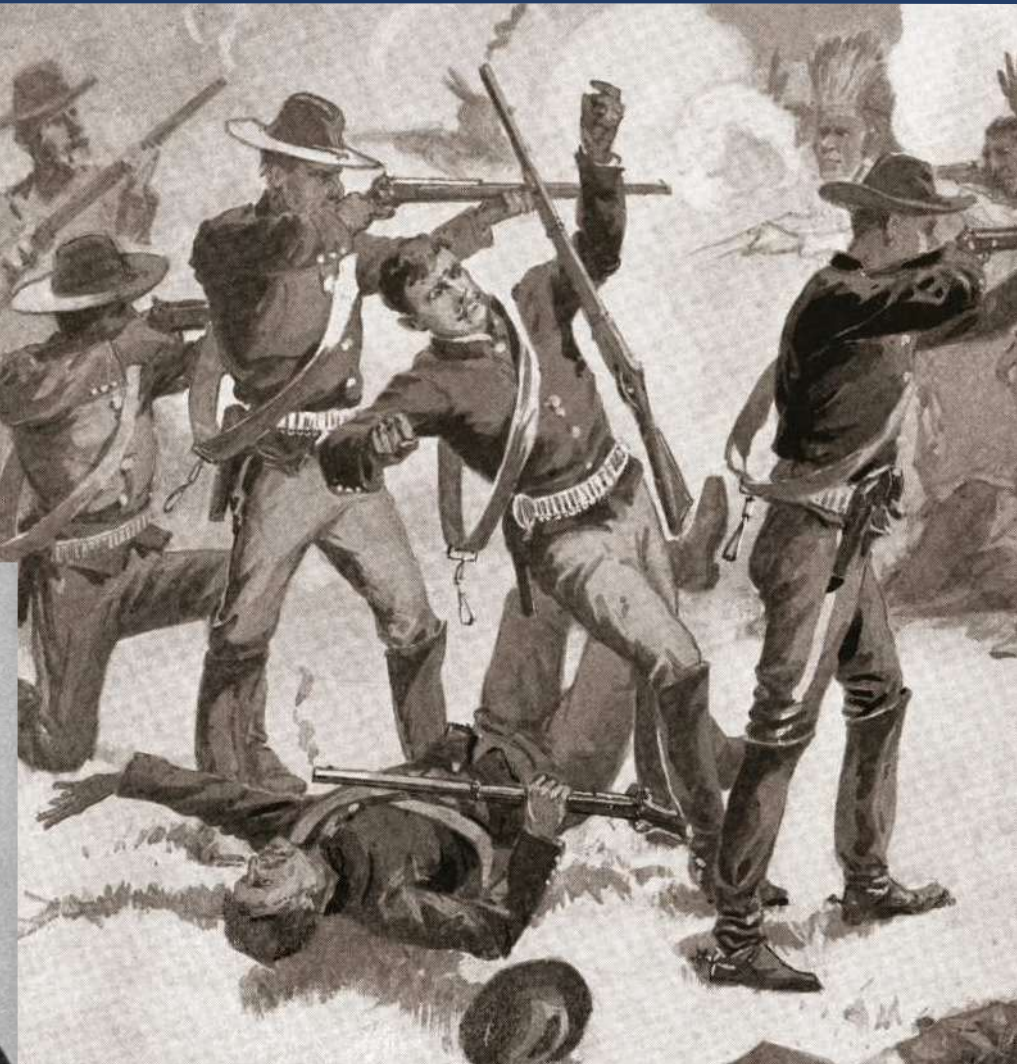
88 BATTLE OF MANILA BAY

As the Spanish-American war raged, the US kept its eye on victory

90 BATTLE OF SAN JUAN HILL

How the Americans took the high ground around Santiago de Cuba





BATTLE OF DERNÄ

SPEND A DAY IN THE LIFE OF US MARINE
IN THE FIRST BARBARY WAR

WORDS JESSICA LEGGETT

DERNA, TRIPOLI 27 APRIL 1805

The US went to war with the Barbary States from 1801 to 1805 and then again in 1815 in an effort to curtail corsair attacks. The Battle of Derna was the decisive skirmish of the First Barbary War, led by Lieutenants William Eaton and Presley O'Bannon. Tasked with restoring a deposed pasha of Tripoli, Hamet Caramelli, in the belief that he would be more favourable to

US ships, they trekked from Alexandria, Egypt, to Derna, in modern-day Libya. Though their success was undermined when the US signed a peace treaty that saw Caramelli removed again in return for hostages, the battle led to the line 'To the shores of Tripoli' being added to the Marine's Hymn as well as the adoption of the Mameluke sword by the Corps.

SETTING UP

On the day of the battle, the US warships *Argus*, *Nautilus* and *Hornet* all converged ready to launch the attack on Derna, with *Nautilus* anchoring close to the shore. Eaton had led his troops 800 kilometres through the North African desert to Derna, only to be refused entry by the governor – who tauntingly challenged Eaton to attack.

COMMUNICATION

The ships opened up communication with each other to discuss their plan of attack. The night before, Eaton told *Nautilus* that he wanted to launch an offensive as soon as possible once the field artillery had been landed. Cover provided by the ships would be crucial to the success of the assault as the US Marines were outnumbered.

LOGISTICAL PROBLEMS

Eaton sent a message to the Marines on board *Argus* requesting that they land their field artillery as soon as possible, so that he could begin his march on the city. However, *Argus* struggled to land its guns on the shore and in the end only one arrived. To avoid wasting time, Eaton decided to continue with the assault regardless.





BEGIN THE ATTACK

Once the field artillery was ready, Eaton ordered the start of the land offensive. In the meantime, the three ships took up their positions along the shore and began to fire heavily on the city. While all of this was happening, enemy fire rained down from the fort for around an hour, making it difficult for the United States to advance.



TAKING CONTROL

Using the ship's heavy fire as cover, the U's soldiers bravely charged towards the Berber fort. As the enemy fled in terror, members of Argus, including Lieutenant O'Bannon, ran inside and removed the native flag. In its place, they raised the Stars and Stripes and took control of the fort's guns, which were primed and ready for immediate use thanks to the vacated Berbers who had been firing them beforehand.



SECURE THE VICTORY

The US forces managed to successfully capture the city and the fort. They then sent in boats to deliver ammunition for the soldiers and to recover those Marines who needed medical attention. Eaton left orders with the fort and he personally made his way to Derna in order to make sure that everything was organised, and that security had been arranged for the evening.



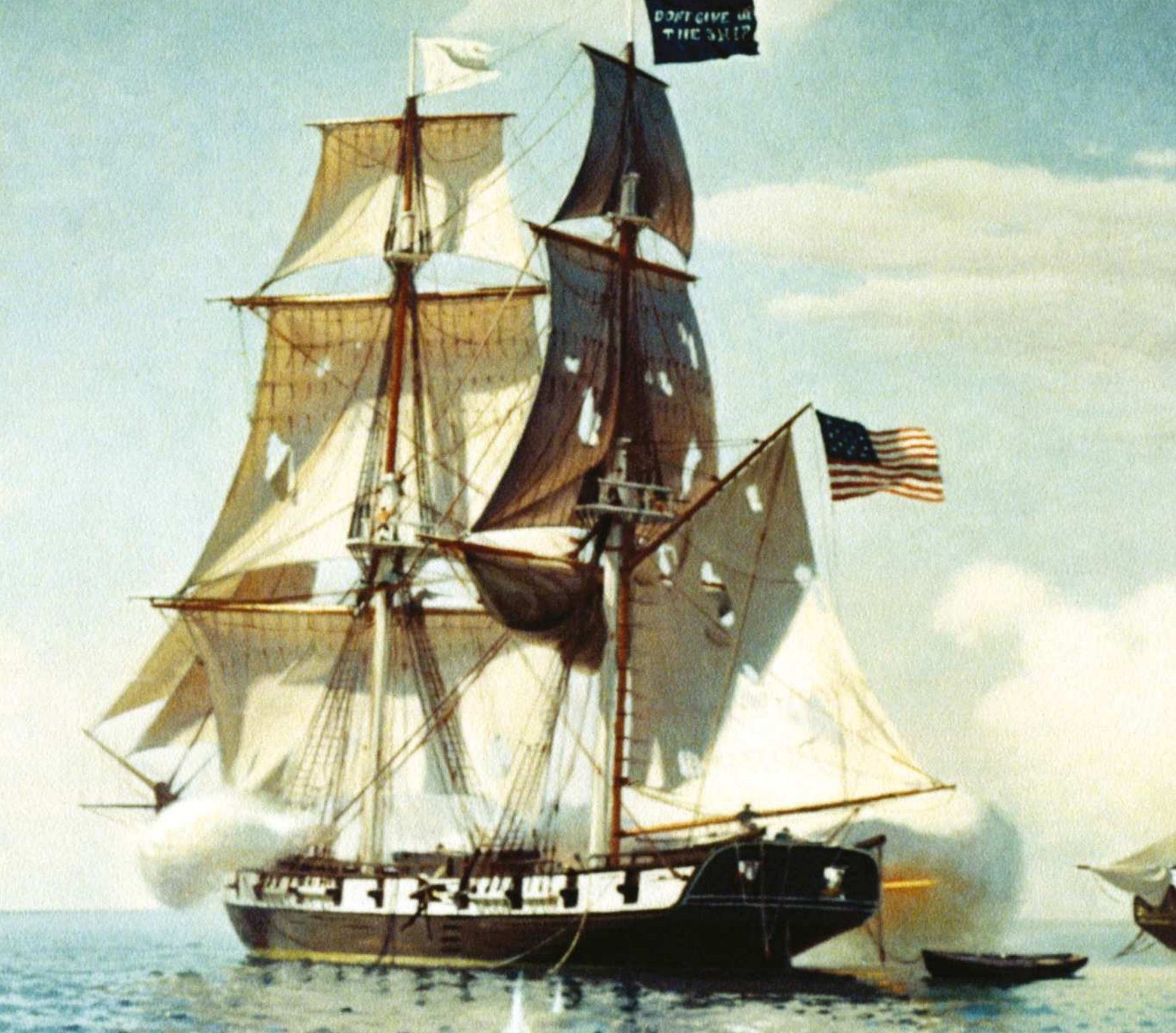
A WAR HERO

After ensuring that the city was secure, Eaton returned to one of the ships in order to receive medical attention himself. During the battle, he had been seriously injured when he was hit in the left wrist by a musket ball while leading the charge. Nevertheless, Eaton survived and he returned to his home country a hero along with O'Bannon and the rest of the troops.



REST AND RECUPERATE

With Derna firmly under the control of the United States after two hours of bloody fighting, it was time for the troops to rest and savour their victory. While the American forces suffered minimal losses, about 800 Tripolitans were killed by the end of the skirmish and 1,200 were wounded, with many more forcibly driven out of the city.



BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE

A SMALL NAVAL BATTLE ON THE AMERICAN FRONTIER
HAD OUTSIZED CONSEQUENCES

WORDS MARC DESANTIS

LAKE ERIE, USA 10 SEPTEMBER 1813

With the outbreak of war between the United States and Great Britain in June 1812, the United States-Canadian frontier became a focal point of the conflict. With the Royal Navy so dominant at sea, one of the few places that Britain could be assailed was Canada. Britain was at this time still preoccupied by the war against Napoleonic France, and so Canada was thinly garrisoned.

Britain had also been encouraging raids by Native Americans out of its Canadian dominion against the American Northwest Territory, which abutted the Great Lakes, and this made Canada a source of enormous irritation for the United States. Very roughly, British Canada lay to the north of the Lakes while the United States lay to the south. An American invasion of Canada in 1812 miscarried and Detroit was captured by British forces.

■ *USS Niagara in battle with HMS Detroit and Queen Charlotte at the Battle of Lake Erie*



In February 1813, the US Navy sent New York shipwright Noah Brown to Presque Isle on Presque Isle Bay to build warships in order to contest control of Lake Erie with the British. Carpenters and other craftsmen, who would eventually number around 200, were drawn north from New York City and Philadelphia. Brown, along with his brother Adam, began building two brigs at Presque Isle. These would become USS Niagara and USS Lawrence.

The war for the Great Lakes was as much about construction speed as it was actual fighting. These were not ships built to last. Noah Brown himself said that the ships “will be needed for one battle; if we win that is all that is wanted of them”.

The British, on the other side of Erie, were aware of the American construction and built up a fleet of their own. This flotilla was placed under Commander Robert H Barclay, a 27-year-

old veteran of the 1805 Battle of Trafalgar, who established his naval base at Amherstburg, Ontario in June 1813. It was at Amherstburg that the big, three-masted, 490-ton HMS Detroit was constructed. Completed in August, it became Barclay's flagship.

Command of US naval forces on Lake Erie was given to 27-year-old Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry. He had spent the early months of the war in command of a small gunboat squadron at Newport, Rhode Island, but wanted to take a more active part in the war. He asked to be transferred to the Lakes and got his wish.

Perry's squadron was vexed by supply problems and finding crews for his ships was difficult, just as it was for the British. Yet Perry also had some good fortune, which came to be known as ‘Perry's Luck’. One example of this occurred when the American commander

NAVAL CONSTRUCTION ON THE GREAT LAKES

The conditions on the Lakes required both combatants to adapt their warship designs

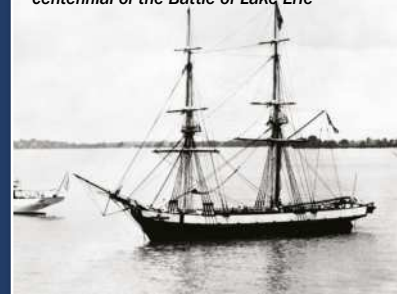
The ships that the Americans and British constructed for use on the Great Lakes once war came, such as the brig USS Lawrence and three-masted ship HMS Detroit, were sloops-of-war, with each vessel possessing a single, full gun deck. They differed structurally from their ocean-going sisters of similar size. A shortage of curved ‘compass’ timbers needed for bows, sterns, and L-shaped reinforcing ‘knees,’ which were difficult to find in local trees, compelled shipwrights to adapt their designs. Bows were made sharper, thereby reducing the demand for compass timber. The transverse frames were also straighter to reduce the demand for compass timbers.

Knees were often eliminated entirely, replaced by clamped deck beams running lengthwise up and down the ship. This produced a deck inferior in strength to one employing conventional knees, but in the fevered wartime atmosphere in which warships were needed quickly, this was deemed acceptable. Quantity, not quality, counted for more.

Though the Great Lakes themselves are deep, their coastal waters were often very shallow, therefore the ships' hulls were made of lesser draught than would have been seen on seagoing ships, so that they could safely navigate inshore.

The hurried pace of construction also forced both navies to use green timber for their ships. Seasoned timber, where the sap has been allowed to dry out over time, was preferred if the ship was to have a long service life. Green wood, in contrast, tended to begin to rot very rapidly and this weakened the ship and curtailed its service life. However, neither side could easily indulge in such long-term thinking. Warships were needed either straight away or not at all.

■ *The rebuilt USS Niagara, originally constructed at Presque Isle, at the 1913 centennial of the Battle of Lake Erie*





■ Oliver Hazard Perry sought a larger role in the war and was given command of US forces on Lake Erie in 1813

“THE AMERICAN SHIPS WERE COMPLETELY UNREADY FOR BATTLE. BARCLAY, HOWEVER, WAS SO FAR AWAY THAT HE COULD NOT DISCERN THIS”

was able to bring his ships over the sandbar that separated the bay from Lake Erie. It was a hard job. The British fleet on Lake Erie was prowling off Presque Isle Bay nearly every day. Before Perry could strike out at the British, he needed to get over the bar. His time came on 31 July, when Barclay's ships had to return to Amherstburg to reprovision and abandoned their blockade. This gave Perry the chance he needed to break out of the Bay.

Perry's flagship on Lake Erie, the two-masted, 480-ton, 20-gun brig USS Lawrence, the twin of its sister USS Niagara, drew 2.7 metres, but the bar was just 1.8 metres below the water. To raise both ships, Perry brought up 'camels' – boats that were filled with water. Timbers were attached from the camels through the portholes of Lawrence and Niagara. The water was removed from the camels, giving extra buoyancy that raised Lawrence, and then Niagara, over the sandbar. It had taken four days but by the morning of 4 August, Perry had escaped.

Barclay, now back at sea with five ships led by the 20-gun Queen Charlotte, came upon Perry's ships soon after they had cleared

the bar. It looked like the Americans were ready to fight, but this was not so. Perry had taken off the ships' heavy guns to lighten them, and everything else was still tied down. The American ships were completely unready for battle. Barclay, however, was so far away that he could not discern this at a distance, and so did not go on the attack, which likely would have resulted in the destruction of the US flotilla if he had.

Once over the bar, Perry headed west for Amherstburg where Barclay's flotilla was based. Arriving at Put-in-Bay in the south west of the lake, Perry began his own blockade of Amherstburg. The Canadian side of the Lakes was even less well-developed than the American, and all of Barclay's supplies had to be brought in by sea. The seaborne supply line was precisely what Perry's blockade intended to stop. Barclay soon began to run low on food. With HMS Detroit having just been finished, and his men down to the last of their rations, Barclay was compelled to issue forth to battle Perry's flotilla on 9 September 1813 before he lost due to famine.

Word that Barclay had come out to fight reached Perry the next day, 10 September. Perry had raised his flag on USS Lawrence, which was named for the late Captain James Lawrence of the US Navy. As captain of the frigate USS Chesapeake, Lawrence had been killed in action during an epic duel with HMS Shannon earlier that June. Mortally wounded and his ship battered by Shannon's guns, Lawrence had exhorted his crew to keep Chesapeake out of British hands. “Don't give up the ship,” he had told them. Perry had these words sewn onto a battle flag that he raised on the Lawrence's mast.

Niagara, along with Lawrence, the most powerful ship in Perry's fleet, was commanded by 30-year-old Lieutenant Jesse Elliot. Elliot was an experienced seaman and had earlier commanded US forces on Lake Erie.

The two fleets neared each other slowly, as was typical for naval battles fought under the power of the wind. The US flotilla comprised, all in line ahead formation, Ariel, Scorpion, Perry's flagship Lawrence, Caledonia, Elliot on Niagara, followed by Somers, Tigress, Porcupine and Trippe. Apart from Lawrence and Niagara, the US ships were small and lightly armed with just one to four guns. Decision, Perry knew, would come from the fighting between his two largest vessels and those of Barclay: HMS Detroit and Queen Charlotte.

Barclay's flotilla, which was, like Perry's, just a squadron in size, had Lady Prevost in the lead, with Barclay on Detroit, followed by the 180-ton General Hunter, Queen Charlotte, Chippeway and Little Belt. In weight of metal thrown by his ships' guns, Barclay's firepower was significantly inferior to Perry's.

Perry brought Lawrence up to engage Detroit and a furious duel ensued.

Niagara was supposed to join him but maddeningly, Elliot failed to respond to any signals from Perry to

come and help. A huge chunk of Perry's firepower was sitting unused.

Caledonia had fallen behind and Elliott would later claim he did not want to break the line of battle by going around it. Lawrence's duel with Detroit continued. Barclay was badly injured but refused to be treated. Queen Charlotte, which should have been engaged by Niagara, decided to close with Lawrence. The American flagship was pounded, with great loss of life. With most of the gun crews wounded or dead, the fire from Lawrence began to peter out. Perry simply could not continue the fight.

At around 2.30pm, Perry made an extraordinary decision. Climbing into the stricken Lawrence's ship's boat, he took down his battle flag and rowed to Niagara. He might have been shot by the British at this time but his luck again held. Barclay, on Detroit, seeing the Lawrence's flag come down, thought he had the victory and allowed himself to go below deck to have his wounds looked after.

Coming upon Niagara, and saying little to Elliott regarding his tardiness, Perry assumed command and took it into the battle. Elliott,





■ Perry takes a small boat from the stricken Lawrence to Niagara, in order to bring the ship into the fight

DONT GIVE UP
THE SHIP

meanwhile, went off in a small boat to get the other, smaller American ships into the fight.

With Niagara now flying his battle flag, Perry closed with the damaged Detroit, while keeping out of range of Queen Charlotte. He pummelled Barclay's ship at point-blank range. When Queen Charlotte tried to come to Detroit's aid, it succeeded only in getting its yardarms entangled with Barclay's vessel.

With the British ships tangled up, side by side, bow to stern, they were at the mercy of Perry in Niagara, which manoeuvred to rake Detroit's stern and Queen Charlotte's bow. There was nothing the British ships could do, except surrender.

The battle was a clear-cut American victory, but it had been costly. Perry's force lost 123 killed or wounded. Barclay's flotilla incurred 134 killed or wounded.

Immediately after the battle, Perry grabbed an envelope and scribbled a report of its outcome upon it. "We have met the enemy," he famously wrote, "and they are ours." His victory was of huge importance. Without control over Lake Erie, the US could never have won the Battle of the Thames, which followed that October. This gave the Americans command over the Old Northwest, and persuaded the British to abandon hopes of establishing an Indian federation in the region that would block westward expansion of the US, which was now set on the road to continental dominion.

BUILDING UP TO WAR

Impressment was a major irritant in British-American relations and a primary cause of the War of 1812

The United States held a number of grievances against Britain, the leading one of which was the Royal Navy's practice of impressment. With the ongoing struggle against Napoleonic France forcing Britain to maintain a colossal fleet of close to 1,000 warships, the Royal Navy's appetite for manpower to crew its ships was ravenous. It laid hands on whatever sailors it could find in British ports, but it also stopped American merchantmen on the high seas for the ostensible purpose of taking off British sailors who had taken service aboard a US vessel. The justification was that, as subjects of the king, they owed service to him.

It was one thing to haul away Britons, but Royal Navy captains were not above also collecting British subjects who had become US citizens, as well as native-born Americans. To Americans, this act was an obnoxious and intolerable breach of US sovereignty.

One especially egregious episode of impressment occurred in 1807 when HMS Leopard fired upon the unsuspecting and unready to fight USS Chesapeake. The latter

took a pounding and lowered its flag, allowing the Leopard's captain to remove three alleged deserters from the Royal Navy that were said to be serving aboard Chesapeake.

The need for sailors with which to crew the ships needed to fight Napoleon, however, was so great that the practice continued despite official American protests. It is thought that approximately 10,000 Americans, or at least those who said they were Americans, were impressed by the Royal Navy during the Napoleonic Wars.



■ HMS Leopard fired on USS Chesapeake and removed three sailors from the damaged vessel

BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

ANDREW JACKSON LED A RAGTAG BUNCH OF AMERICAN
SOLDIERS AND MILITIA AGAINST BRITISH REGULARS IN
THE LAST GREAT BATTLE OF THE WAR OF 1812

WORDS MARC DESANTIS

NEW ORLEANS, USA 8 JANUARY 1815

New Orleans was a tempting prize for the British in late 1814. Sitting on the southern reaches of the Mississippi River, it was an immensely important port serving the western United States. The war had been raging since June 1812, and two years' worth of cargo had built up, immovable because of overwhelming British naval power. All of this material – including tobacco, cotton and sugar – was worth a fortune.

This aroused the cupidity of Vice Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane of the Royal Navy, who saw a chance to lay his hands on this treasure trove of which he would be able to claim some as his own prize. Capturing these goods would also hurt the Americans economically, as would wresting away one of its major seaports. He persuaded the British government to approve an expedition against the city. The British Army troops that would land and do the fighting were to be under the command of Major General Robert Ross, who had recently

■ Major General Andrew Jackson leads the defence at the Battle of New Orleans against a Highlander charge



set fire to Washington, DC, in August 1814. Ross, however, died in September, and he was replaced that October by the brother-in-law of the duke of Wellington, Major General Sir Edward M Pakenham.

Pakenham, the 36-year-old son of a Royal Navy captain, had served in the British Army during the Napoleonic wars, seeing action in Denmark, Ireland, the West Indies, Spain and France. Having proved himself both courageous and capable, and being thought one of the army's best officers, he was given command of the British expeditionary force, but it would take a long while before he could join up with it on the western side of the Atlantic.

Knowing well what New Orleans was worth, as well as its strategic importance, the Americans suspected the target of this force would be that city, or perhaps Mobile, Alabama. Preparations for its defence began in earnest, but the Americans had been hampered all war by the amateurishness of its army. Trained

soldiers were few in America, having been recruited in only small numbers during the earlier presidency of Thomas Jefferson. The United States had therefore been forced to rely on militia during much of the war, and its military's performance against British regulars had been found wanting in most respects.

The US was fortunate that command of the defence against the British invasion fell to 47-year-old Major General Andrew Jackson, a ferocious fighter who had a deep grudge against the British dating back to the American War of Independence. 'Old Hickory', as his soldiers affectionately called him, led an attack against Pensacola, in Spanish Florida, which was expected to be a launching pad for the invasion. The town fell so rapidly that the British forces there had only enough time to escape capture.

Jackson would need more men if he were to successfully defend the southern USA. Most of the troops he would have to defend New Orleans from attack were militia varying in

ability. One of the best units was the battalion of the Louisiana Free Men of Color under its commander, Major Pierre Lacoste. Another excellent militia unit was that of Major Jean Baptiste Plauché, notable for its marvellous uniforms. These were supplemented by another militia unit, the company-sized Free Men of Color commanded by Major Louis Daquin. Not much more than 1,000 of Jackson's 5,500 troops were actual regular troops.

Admiral Cochrane was aware the Americans, under Jackson, were waiting for an attack on Mobile, so he decided to strike elsewhere. He moved to Lake Bourgne where he deployed 42 longboats, each mounting a single gun, which met and defeated five US gunboats on 14 December. Cochrane next landed forces on Pea Island, which would become the staging point for the attack on New Orleans. While there, he received intelligence from local Spanish fishermen who, not liking the Americans, who had only taken control of the region with the



OLD HICKORY

Jackson was a tough fighter and a skilled opponent for the British

Major General Andrew Jackson was the son of an Irish immigrant who died before Jackson was born on 15 March 1767 in South Carolina. Raised by his mother, as a 13-year-old he joined the American Revolution. He was captured by the British in April 1781. Legend has it he was ordered to clean the boots of a British officer and when he refused, the officer smacked him on the head with his sword, leaving him with a scar. Jackson thus acquired an undying hatred of the British. He became ill with smallpox, but survived, and was freed in a prisoner exchange. Unfortunately, Jackson's family died during the war.

After the war, Jackson became an attorney and set up a law practice in Nashville, Tennessee. Elected to the US Senate, he became a major general of the state's militia in 1802. Prior to the Battle of New Orleans, he led the American force that smashed the Red Sticks Indians during the Creek War of 1813-14.

Jackson was loved by the men who served under him, who nicknamed him 'Old Hickory.' He garnered enormous fame as the victor at the Battle of New Orleans and became the seventh president of the United States in 1829.



■ The young Jackson was struck on the head when he would not clean a British officer's boots



■ British General Edward Pakenham was mortally wounded during the Battle of New Orleans

“THE BRITISH ADVANCED INTO THE TEETH OF WITHERING AMERICAN FIRE. IN WAR, CONFUSION PLAYS HAVOC WITH ALL PLANS, AND IT DESCENDED AT THE WORST POSSIBLE TIME FOR PAKENHAM”

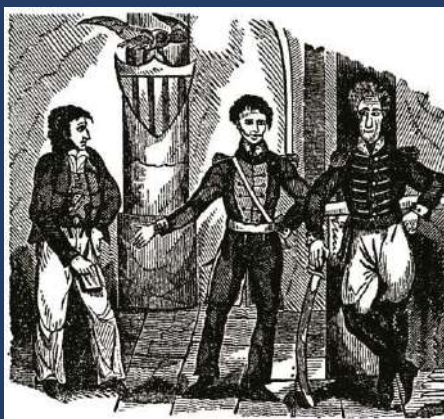


JEAN LAFITTE AND COMPANY

Jean Lafitte and his band of pirates provided a useful aid to Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans

Hailing from Saint-Domingue in the Caribbean, Jean Lafitte and his brothers set themselves up as pirates in Barataria Bay. As of July 1814, the Lafitte brothers were under indictment by the US government for piracy, and Jean's brother Pierre had been arrested. Lafitte had also been offered commission in the British Royal Navy for his help but after swearing fealty to the American side, he was promised full pardons for himself and his brothers if he aided in the defence of New Orleans.

Not only did Lafitte bring troops, but he also came with much-needed gunpowder, ammunition, flints and firearms. Another of his brothers, Dominique You, would oversee two gun crews composed of Barataria men on Line Jackson. On 6 February 1815, after the battle, Lafitte, his brothers and his Barataria men were fully pardoned by the US government.



■ Jean Lafitte, Andrew Jackson, and Governor William Claiborne during a wartime meeting

1803 Louisiana Purchase, told him about the Canal Villeré. It should have been blocked by a senior officer of the Louisiana militia, Major General Jacques de Villeré, but he neglected to do so, perhaps because, as it ran right past his own plantation, he hoped to avoid having to pay to clear it afterward.

Jackson had expected the British to attack the city either via Lake Pontchartrain to the north or by coming straight up the Mississippi, and these were where he established defences. Cochrane, however, would use the route from Lake Bourgne via the canal that would take his troops westward to within 1 kilometre of the Mississippi River.

Jackson declared martial law in New Orleans once news of the loss of the gunboats on Lake Bourgne reached him. It was vital that he shore up the city's precarious defences, before the British arrived in force. One who appeared to offer his services to Jackson was Jean Lafitte, a French creole from Saint-Domingue who had left when the British had seized the island. He was also a notorious pirate who, together with his brother Pierre, had set up a base on an island in Barataria Bay, south of New Orleans. He had many men at his disposal and they would gladly fight on behalf of the US, he promised.

The roughly 7,500 British troops coming toward New Orleans were mainly composed of regulars, many of whom had fought in Europe against Napoleon. Cochrane began his landings on 21 December, with the first boat lift depositing around 2,000 men. The landings continued over the next day. With the force ashore, it cut its way through the dense terrain

of the local bayou, tramping slowly beside the Canal Villeré.

The British advance guard under Colonel William Thornton, which reached the eastern bank of the Mississippi, was just two hours' march from the city. Thornton advised an immediate push onward, before the Americans knew they were there, but Major General John Keane demurred. He had less than 2,000 soldiers with him, no artillery, and he foresaw the probability that he would run into a much larger number of American troops. His faulty intelligence had told him there were about 15,000 Americans somewhere in front of him, so he decided to wait for follow-on forces to join him and made camp for the night.

Jackson struck at Keane's camp on the night of 23 December, mainly with militia riflemen, supported by gunfire from the schooner USS Carolina in the Mississippi. Her guns were manned by Lafitte's Baratarians men. Jackson himself was in command of a force of regulars. The attack miscarried and Jackson retreated, but not before hitting the British hard, especially with artillery fire from the Carolina.

The next battle would be for New Orleans itself. Jackson established a defensive position on the West Bank of the Mississippi and set up a gun battery in a redoubt on the eastern bank. To forestall the British advance, he cut the levee beside the river, and flooded the ground between him and the enemy, thereby allowing him to continue his preparations unhindered.

Pakenham at last arrived to take command of his army on 25 December. He made a "reconnaissance in force" against Line Jackson on 28 December to gauge American capabilities before he committed himself fully. The Americans had the support of the Carolina, as well as the USS Louisiana, which both fired from the river. The British came close to a breakthrough, but Pakenham, wanting to wait for the arrival of heavy artillery and more troops, decided not to press the assault any further that day. He did not understand how he seriously had unhinged the American left wing, which was bounded by a cypress swamp, and thereby gave up a reasonably good chance of smashing his way through the American defence and capture New Orleans.

For the next go, Pakenham would still have less artillery than did Jackson, since it was very difficult to unload the guns from his ships and transport them overland in the poor weather. On 1 January 1815, Pakenham had his artillery

open fire on the American positions. Both sides traded cannon fire at range and several American batteries were put out of action, but having few big guns and plagued by a dearth of ammunition – the British ran out – Pakenham refused to order a general attack.

Jackson kept up the work on the defence line, which he did not complete until 6 January. Pakenham, in the meantime, decided to take a different approach. If he attacked and seized the West Bank, he could use the captured American guns against Jackson's right wing. To get his troops across the Mississippi, he would have to extend the Canal Villeré up to the river itself so that his small boats could get through.

Things went awry. On the morning of 8 January, the dam that was supposed to hold back the Mississippi waters buckled, and there was no chance the nighttime subsidiary strike under Colonel Thornton at the West Bank would coincide with the main attack on Line Jackson by the main British army.

Pakenham, though his battle plan was in tatters, ordered a general attack on Line Jackson that began around 6am on 8 January. The British advanced into the teeth of withering American fire. In war, confusion plays havoc with all plans, and it descended at the worst possible time for Pakenham. On the British right wing, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Mullins, the officer charged with bringing forward the ladders and fascines which the British were to use to get over Line Jackson, had failed to bring them forward. Mullins, commander of the 44th Foot, the regiment which was supposed to lead the assault, had misunderstood where he was supposed to have them and the equipment had been mistakenly left about half a kilometre behind the 44th's jump off point. The British right's attack, under the overall command of

Major General Samuel Gibbs, was thus delayed and the bridging parties of the 44th were slowed by the confusion that reigned as they struggled to get back into line and were cut up badly by American fire.

On the British left, under Major General Keane, there was more success, but this assault, led by Colonel Robert Rennie, foundered for lack of support. The 93rd Foot, a regiment of Scottish Highlanders who were originally supposed lend their weight to Keane's assault, were sent to hit the American line between Gibbs on the right and Keane on the left. This brought them straight into the centre of Jackson's line. The Highlanders were pummelled by American artillery and small arms fire and got nowhere.

With their commander killed, Pakenham assumed direct command of the Highlanders, but was himself soon mortally wounded. General Keane also was badly wounded. Command of the reeling British army now fell to Major General John Lambert, who had until then been in command of Pakenham's reserve. Seeing the British were collapsing, he ordered a retreat. The Battle of New Orleans was over, having last about two hours. British losses were severe, with 291 killed, 1,262 injured, and close to 500 having been captured or gone missing. Jackson had just 13 dead, 39 men wounded and another 19 missing.

Given this terrible bloodshed, it was a bitter irony that the battle had been fought after the US and Britain had concluded a peace treaty in Ghent on 24 December, formally ending the war. Jackson's heroic leadership of New Orleans won him accolades across the United States, and he was propelled to the White House in the next decade in large part because of his epic defence of the city.



■ Map of the lower Mississippi River and the environment of New Orleans



■ The American force at New Orleans was composed of many elements including soldiers of Major Daquin's Battalion of Free Men of Color and Native American Choctaws who battle here against British troops

THE TEXAS REVOLUTION

AS RESENTMENT TOWARDS THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT GREW IN AMERICAN-MAJORITY TEXAS, THINGS REACHED BREAKING POINT

MEXICO 2 OCTOBER 1835 - 21 APRIL 1836

What was it?

In protest at legislative changes made by the government, residents of the Mexican province of Texas took up arms in late 1835 and expelled the region's federal troops. Shortly after, a provisional Texian government was assembled to oversee the revolution and determine its goals – a return to the Mexican Constitution of 1824 or independence.

Angered by the rebellion, President Antonio López de Santa Anna opted to personally lead a military force to retake Texas, entering the province in early 1836. The cruelty shown by the Mexican army caused swathes of civilians to flee before them and ultimately won more sympathy for the revolutionaries' cause. The decisive conflict came at the Battle of San Jacinto, where Santa Anna was captured. The Texian army won after just 18 minutes.

The revolution left Texas as a republic, though Mexico refused to recognise it. This state of affairs, which would exist for nearly a decade, ended in annexation by the US and the outbreak of the Mexican-American War.

Why did it happen?

There were a number of factors that contributed to the outbreak of the Texas Revolution, but chief among them was a cultural and political disconnect between the Anglo-American population of the region, and the Mexican government. After winning independence in 1821, Mexico relaxed regulations on colonists, or 'empresarios', which allowed thousands of settlers to move to Texas from the southern United States. The end result was a region where Anglo-American Texans outnumbered the Spanish and Mexican Tejanos.

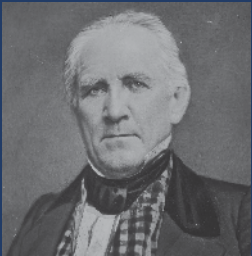
The final straw came with the introduction of the 'Siete Leyes' (Seven Laws) in 1835. This legislation radically changed the governmental structure of Mexico, but their most salient consequence was the further centralisation of political power under Santa Anna. Reaction to these changes in Texas was overwhelmingly negative, and effectively lit the revolutionary touch paper, though it's safe to say that revolution had already become a case of 'when' and not 'if'.



WHO WAS INVOLVED?



ANTONIO LÓPEZ DE SANTA ANNA
21 February 1794 - 21 June 1876
President of Mexico, he led the Mexican Army during the revolution and was ultimately captured at San Jacinto.



SAM HOUSTON
2 March 1793 - 26 July 1863
Leader of the Texian army, Houston successfully led his forces in the Battle of San Jacinto to clinch victory for the revolutionaries.



DAVY CROCKETT
17 August 1786 - 6 March 1836
A famed American frontiersman and politician, Crockett passed into folklore thanks to his heroic death at the Battle of the Alamo.

■ James Fannin and his men were executed after the Battle of Coleto Creek



Remember the Alamo,
 painted by Frederick
 Coffay Yohn



TIMELINE

**2 OCTOBER
 1835**



Though little more than a skirmish, the Battle of Gonzales marks the first official conflict of the Texas Revolution. It ends in a decisive victory for the Texans.

**23 OCTOBER
 1835**



After months of manoeuvring, the Constitution of 1824 is overturned, and in December the Siete Leyes are enacted, underlining the validity of the Texian cause.

**6 MARCH
 1836**



After holding out for 13 days against vastly superior numbers, Texian forces are overrun and slaughtered at the Battle of the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas.

**27 MARCH
 1836**



On the express orders of Santa Anna, hundreds of Texian prisoners are massacred at Goliad following their surrender at the Battle of Coleto Creek.

**21 APRIL
 1836**



Texian forces rout the Mexican army in the decisive Battle of San Jacinto, the final major armed conflict of the Texas Revolution. Santa Anna is taken as a prisoner.

**14 MAY
 1836**



The Treaties of Velasco are signed by the captured Santa Anna, ending hostilities, though they are not officially ratified by the Mexican government.



THE LEGEND OF DAVY CROCKETT

Frontiersman David 'Davy' Crockett led the 12-man Tennessee Mounted Volunteers, a group of backwoodsmen charged with defending a low section of the outer wall near the church. Whether Crockett was killed in the church or captured and executed immediately afterwards on Santa Anna's orders remains disputed. Crockett went on to become an American folk hero.



BLASTING THE DOORS

The church, which was located in the southeast quadrant, was the strongest building in the three-acre compound. To gain entry, the Mexicans turned a captured 18-pounder cannon on the mission and blasted open its thick double doors.



ALAMO'S MAKEOVER

The Alamo's garrison improved its defences in the months before Santa Anna's army arrived by mounting artillery on the ramparts and constructing infantry obstacles outside the walls, such as sharpened tree branches known as abatis.



DEATH STRUGGLE

Soldiers on both sides fought hand-to-hand inside the compound, barracks and church once the Mexicans had breached the perimeter. They used clubbed muskets, pistols, hatchets and long knives to defend themselves against the attackers.

BATTLE OF THE ALAMO

THE PIVOTAL SKIRMISH IN THE TEXAS REVOLUTION SAW A FRONTIERSMAN ENGAGING IN A FIGHT THAT HAS GONE DOWN IN AMERICAN HISTORY AND LEGEND

WORDS WILLIAM E WELSH

SAN ANTONIO DE BÉXAR, MEXICAN TEXAS 6 MARCH 1836

The Mexican Army's assault on the Mission San Antonio de Valero inadvertently began when an overly enthusiastic soldier shouted in the pre-dawn darkness, "Viva Santa Anna!" The cry rippled through the ranks and bugles officially sounded the attack. Bathed in moonlight, about 1,000 Mexicans surged towards the old Spanish mission-turned-fort known as the Alamo.

'Santa Anna' was Antonio López de Santa Anna, a Mexican general whose fight for independence from Spain was rewarded when he was elected president in 1833. Unfortunately, what began as a promise to unite the nation soon turned into chaos. During his second year in power, he revoked Mexico's constitution, purged the state militia and crushed all opposition. He then turned his attention north.

A decade before Santa Anna had come to power, the Mexican government had allowed Americans to immigrate to the Mexican state of Coahuila y Tejas, and thousands did. However, Santa Anna didn't like the fact that the 'norteamericanos' heavily outnumbered the Mexicans in the state and feared that the US would try to annex it. He deliberately provoked the settlers, known as Texians, into rebellion by demanding they convert to Catholicism, enforcing a previously ignored stipulation in their original immigration contracts.

The first shots of the Texan Revolution were fired in the town of Gonzales on 2 October 1835 when Texians fired on a Mexican force under General Martín de Cos. The Mexicans retreated to San Antonio de Béxar, where the Alamo was located, but the Texians drove them out two months later. Rather than return home, some of the Texians garrisoned the Alamo.

Following de Cos' defeat, Santa Anna led a 6,000-strong army to stamp out the rebellion, besieging the Alamo on 23 February 1836. When the troops there refused to surrender, Santa Anna ordered his men to raise a blood-red flag within sight of the fort. Its message was simple: no quarter.

When Santa Anna arrived, the Alamo's small garrison was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William Travis, a Texian army officer. Santa Anna's first move was to have his men dig siege trenches to protect his artillery as it was moved closer to the fort in order to breach or weaken the north wall in preparation for an infantry assault. It was a slow process, but by 5 March they had advanced the guns to within 68 metres of their target. Travis' men did their best to shore up the walls each night.

Because he probably feared the arrival of a relief army, Santa Anna issued orders for a pre-dawn assault on 6 March, even though the north wall was still intact. The initial attack stalled due to the fort's defensive fire but when Santa Anna committed his reinforcements, they overpowered the Americans.

Traditional reports hold that no prisoners were taken. However, a contemporary account by Mexican Lieutenant Colonel Enrique de la Peña – a supposed eyewitness – that surfaced more than a century after the battle claims that seven prisoners were taken by Santa Anna and executed by sword. Traditionalists hold that it does not change the fact that all of the defenders were slain that morning.

'Remember the Alamo' became a rallying cry throughout the Texian Army. On 21 April 1836, the force won the Battle of San Jacinto, captured Santa Anna and forced him and his troops back across the Rio Grande, assuring Texas' independence.

"SANTA ANNA'S FIRST MOVE WAS TO HAVE HIS MEN DIG SIEGE TRENCHES TO PROTECT HIS ARTILLERY AS IT WAS MOVED CLOSER TO THE FORT IN ORDER TO BREACH OR WEAKEN THE NORTH WALL IN PREPARATION FOR AN INFANTRY ASSAULT"



MEXICAN ARMY OF OPERATIONS

TROOPS 6,000
CANNONS 21



ANTONIO LÓPEZ DE SANTA ANNA

LEADER

A shrewd politician and bold commander steeped in the Napoleonic tradition who excelled at administrative planning and logistics.

Strengths Knew the value of a rapid march and surprise.

Weakness Used terror as a weapon to intimidate the enemy.



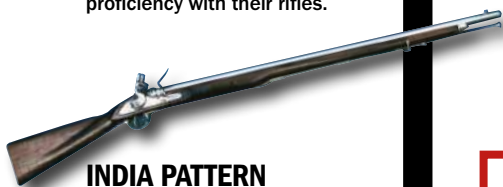
PERMANENTES (REGULARS)

KEY UNIT

They possessed an esprit de corps that was an essential quality for assault troops.

Strengths Line troops of various types, including light troops, grenadiers and sappers.

Weakness Lacked skill and proficiency with their rifles.



INDIA PATTERN ENFIELD MUSKET

KEY WEAPON

The .75 calibre Brown Bess had good range and accuracy for a smoothbore musket.

Strengths A robust, durable firearm that could perform well in harsh environments.

Weakness The Mexicans used low-quality gunpowder that compromised the gun's performance.

	Phase 1
	Phase 2
	Phase 3

01 STRETCH THE DEFENCES

Santa Anna's plan to attack the Alamo with 1,700 men in the pre-dawn darkness on 6 March calls for four columns to advance simultaneously against the compound. The columns charge the centre of the north and east walls, as well as the northeastern and southeastern corners.

02 STALLED ATTACK

At 5.30am, Mexican assault troops charge into the teeth of heavy fire from the Texans on the north wall. Although equipped with 28 scaling ladders, they fail to gain the parapet. The Mexicans seek protection directly beneath the wall and exchange fire with the defenders as they mull over their next move.

03 CANNON BLASTS

American cannoneers on raised platforms fire at close range into the tight ranks of the attackers. Some of the gun crews use langrage – scrap iron that functioned like a canister round – killing and maiming a dozen or more men at a time.

04 REINFORCEMENTS TO THE RESCUE

Although all four attacks falter in the face of the defenders' well-aimed fire, Santa Anna commits his reserves in an all-out effort to breach the north wall. General Juan Amador, leader of the reinforcements, climbs over the wall with some of his men, one of whom opens a door in the north wall. Mexican troops pour into the compound, forcing the Texans to abandon the walls and retreat to final stands in the church and barracks.

05 BRING YOUR AXE

General Martín de Cos' men fan out along the west wall, where they use axes to smash their way through doors and windows.



TEXIAN ARMY

TROOPS 189
CANNONS 21



LIEUTENANT COLONEL WILLIAM B TRAVIS LEADER

A well-educated lawyer who sought to obtain larger numbers of reinforcements to no avail.
Strengths Diligent, methodical and fearless when faced with overwhelming odds.
Weaknesses Moody, vain and inexperienced in field command.



CROCKETT'S TENNESSEE MOUNTED VOLUNTEERS KEY UNIT

Their experience on the frontier fighting Indians made them resilient soliders.
Strengths They fought with extraordinary ferocity.
Weaknesses As citizen-soldiers, they were sometimes prone to disobeying commands.

LONG RIFLE KEY WEAPON

Sharpshooters relied on its superb accuracy to pick off enemy artillerymen during the siege.
Strengths A highly effective long-range rifle.
Weaknesses It was slower to reload than a smoothbore musket.



10 BIG EXPLOSION AVERTED

A group of Mexican soldiers charge up a ramp to the raised artillery platform at the back of the church, where they shoot or stab the artillerymen manning three cannons. They shoot a man who is trying to ignite the fort's gunpowder magazine with a torch.

09 HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT

Tennessean Davy Crockett orders his men to fall back to the church for a final stand. The defenders inside the building rely on pistols and knives, but they are heavily outnumbered by bayonet-wielding Mexicans who are killing soldiers and civilians alike.

08 SECONDARY DEFENSIVE POSITIONS

The majority of the Americans retreat to buildings inside the fort, where they take up fortified positions. Colonel Jim Bowie, a gravely ill prominent volunteer, is slain in his sick bed in a room along the south wall. Although Bowie technically outranks Travis, the latter commands Texian regulars rather than volunteers and therefore is the senior commander.

07 ESCAPE ATTEMPT

With Mexicans swarming into the compound from multiple directions, around 75 defenders flee over the east wall of the fort in a desperate bid to escape certain death. A regiment of mounted lancers stationed to the east systematically run down the enemy, killing them with their lances and sabres. Mounted lancers from other parts of the perimeter arrive to help hunt down the escapees and ensure that they are all caught.

06 SILENCE THE BIG GUN

Colonel Juan Morales leads 100 men who climb the walls at the southwest corner of the compound and capture the fort's only 18-pounder cannon before the Texians can spike it. The bulk of his troops fan out through the southern half of the compound.



A PANICKED RETREAT

What began as an orderly retreat soon descended into chaos as panic-stricken Unionist troops fled from the battlefield and back down the now choked roads to Washington. Incredibly, they were scrambling to safety alongside equally terrified picnickers, each one only hours earlier having laid out their blankets in anticipation of a Unionist procession.

FIRST BATTLE OF BULL RUN

THE FIRST FIGHT OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR ENDED IN A DECISIVE VICTORY FOR THE CONFEDERATES

WORDS CHARLES GINGER

VIRGINIA, USA 21 JULY 1861

The first major clash of the American Civil War, the First Battle of Bull Run provided a harsh wake-up call to anyone who had anticipated a swift conclusion to the rebellion, claiming the lives of approximately 850 men and horribly maiming countless more besides.

The Civil War had escalated quickly. After Abraham Lincoln won the presidential election in November 1860, vowing to keep slavery out of the western territories that were yet to become states, many in the South felt threatened. Despite Lincoln's assurances in his inaugural address that he had "no purpose to interfere with the institution of slavery where it exists in the United States," these states feared the North would eventually seek to abolish all slavery, which was the cornerstone of the South's agricultural economy. South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas seceded from



HOLD THE LINE

Having initially been forced back onto the slopes of Henry House Hill, the bedraggled Confederate forces were fortunate to receive reinforcement in the nick of time, a development that enabled them to establish a defensive line and hold off the Unionist advance. In time they would be able to turn the tide and force their adversaries from the field.

OLD-FASHIONED KILLING

Despite being viewed as the first 'modern' war due to the vast amount of technological progress it inspired, the American Civil War of 1861-65 was still a product of its time, with both sides relying heavily on cavalry, bayonet charges and swords.

LOOSE CANNONS

Predominantly made of bronze, 12-, 24- and 32-pounder howitzers featured on battlefields throughout the war, with 12-pounders being the most prevalent. Built for short-range fire, these cannons were utterly devastating weapons capable of raining explosive shells and canister shot down on the enemy.

the United States, but the war itself didn't break out until 12 April 1861. Confederate forces bombarded Fort Sumter, an island fortress that controlled Charleston harbour, in South Carolina. Lincoln replied by calling for 75,000 volunteers to support the US Army in crushing the uprising. In response to this show of force, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina and Tennessee joined the Confederacy.

With the stage set for a confrontation, Major McDowell was promoted to brigadier general and placed in charge of the Department of North-Eastern Virginia. Though he felt that his 35,000 recruits would require extensive training before seeing action, political pressure forced him into going on the offensive.

He devised a plan to outflank the Confederates stationed at Bull Run (around 40 kilometres from Washington, DC) and embarked from the capital on 16 July 1861. Unfortunately for the Unionist general, a

Confederate spy named Rose O'Neal Greenhow had obtained his plans and passed them on to General Beauregard. Aware that reinforcements were headed via rail from the Shenandoah Valley to Beauregard's position, McDowell launched a pre-emptive attack on Beauregard's army. The attack began with an artillery barrage at 5.15am on the morning of 21 July.

Alerted by projectiles striking alarmingly close to where he was eating breakfast, Beauregard countered the Unionist attack by trying to defend his exposed left flank. He also waited to hear how the planned attack on the Union's left flank was going. But these plans actually failed to materialise, as the troops had not received Beauregard's order. When a brigade under the command of Colonel William T Sherman forded the Bull Run tributary to attack the enemy's right flank, the Confederate lines began to buckle. Only fierce resistance led by the likes of Thomas Jackson (earning him

the infamous nickname 'Stonewall') prevented the Unionists from closing in for the kill.

Fortunately for the Confederates, reinforcements soon began to arrive, enabling them to establish a defensive line on the slopes of Henry House Hill. Having held McDowell's advance, the Southern army turned the tide in the mid-afternoon when the 33rd Virginians stormed an artillery battery, earning a foothold that eventually led to the Confederates putting their adversaries to flight around an hour later.

The crushing Unionist defeat sent shockwaves across the previously confident Northern states, with anyone who had harboured ideas of a rapid end to the conflict instantly disabused of such notions. Instead of the battle extinguishing the Confederate cause, it stoked the flames of rebellion that would engulf the United States for four long years and claim over 620,000 lives.



UNIONISTS

TROOPS 35,000
CAVALRY 7 COMPANIES
CANNONS 30



BRIGADIER GENERAL IRVIN MCDOWELL

LEADER

Having graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1838, McDowell went on to teach military tactics at the academy.
Strengths He was bold enough to attempt to cut off his enemy's reinforcements before launching an attack.
Weaknesses Pressured into attacking before his troops were ready.



SHERMAN'S VOLUNTEERS

KEY UNIT

Made up of four infantry regiments and Company E of the 3rd US Artillery, the men fought as the Third Brigade of General Daniel Tyler's First Division.
Strengths Battled tenaciously and forced the Confederate line to buckle.
Weaknesses Inexperience likely contributed to their losses of 120 dead and 211 wounded.



SPRINGFIELD 1812

KEY WEAPON

Priced at \$20 each, this rifle fired a .58 calibre bullet, and was the most commonly used gun throughout the American Civil War.
Strengths Accurate at up to 400 yards.
Weaknesses Required a skilled marksman to maintain its effectiveness.

01 OPENING SALVO

Intent on harassing the Confederates' right flank in order to draw fire away from the main attack, McDowell directs Colonel Israel Richardson to position his guns at Blackburn's Ford. At approximately 5.15am, Richardson fires the first shots of the day, his artillery raining cannon fire down on the enemy positions across the water, some of which fly far enough to smash down close to where General Beauregard is eating his breakfast.

02 SHERMAN TAKES THE INITIATIVE

As the numerically superior Unionists press their advance on the Confederate left flank in the hope of routing the enemy before its reinforcements arrive, Colonel William Sherman orders his men to cross an ungaurded part of the creek and hit the Confederate right flank, catching their opponents off guard. Colonel Nathan 'Shanks' Evans of the Confederates, having previously rushed to hold off the Unionist thrust before Sherman's intervention, now finds himself withdrawing with his men to the slopes of Matthews Hill.

03 CONFEDERATE COLLAPSE

Despite fighting tenaciously, the Confederate line begins to crumble under intense pressure from the surprise Unionist thrust against its right flank. A chaotic retreat to Henry House Hill ensues at about 11.30am.

04 STAND AND FIGHT

Fortunately for Evans and his fellow commanders, help arrives in the form of Captain John D Imboden's artillery battery, which unleashes a hail of fire on the pursuing Unionists for long enough to enable the Confederates to establish a defensive line on Henry House Hill. A potential rout has been averted.

05 MCDOWELL'S FATAL ERROR

Confident that he has the Confederates hopelessly trapped on the hill, McDowell commits the critical error of deciding to obliterate his enemy with a relentless artillery bombardment instead of seizing the ground before him.





10 FLEE FOR YOUR LIVES

Having begun their retreat in a relatively calm manner, the Unionists instantly panic when a blast of artillery overturns a wagon rolling among them. Intermingled with terrified civilians who had come to witness the spectacle of a crushing Confederate defeat, the soldiers of the North scramble back to the Unionist capital at Washington, DC, having been thrashed.



09 FORCED FROM THE HILL

At around 4pm, the remaining Unionist troops are finally rushed off Henry House Hill and sent into a scattered retreat. At the same time, Colonel Oliver O'Howard's brigade finds itself on the wrong end of an assault on Chinn Ridge (west of the main battle) from two Confederate brigades recently arrived from Shenandoah Valley. At the sight of the enemy's collapse, General Beauregard commands his entire army to move forward. Total victory is within his grasp.



08 A FIERY EXCHANGE

Desperate to plug the holes torn in their flank by the Confederate onslaught, Unionist infantrymen rush to engage the triumphant captors of the guns. A ferocious fight ensues that results in the Union artillery exchanging hands several times. Implored to "Yell like furies!" by Jackson, the cry of the Confederates' 'rebel yell' fills the sky as they smash into the Union ranks.



07 TURNING THE TIDE

Having held their ground, the Confederates spot a chance to put the enemy batteries out of action. In a charge that will take a horrendous toll, the 33rd Virginians overrun the guns of Captain Charles Griffin, who had moved two of his guns to the southern end of his line with the aim of enveloping the enemy in a hailstorm of cannon fire. This success is then compounded by the capture of Captain James Ricketts' battery of the First US Artillery.



06 STONEWALL ARRIVES

Further reinforcement arrives for the Confederates in the form of Thomas Jackson, who earns his famous nickname during a determined defence of the Southerner's position from around noon until 2pm. It is alleged that when Jackson vowed, "We will give them (the Unionists) the bayonet", Brigadier General Barnard Bee (who died during the battle) exclaimed to his men: "There is Jackson standing like a stone wall. Let us determine to die here, and we will conquer."



CONFEDERATES

TROOPS 18,000
CAVALRY 12 COMPANIES
CANNONS 21



PGT BEAUREGARD LEADER

A trained civil engineer, Beauregard fought bravely in the Mexican-American War, seeing action in many battles and convincing his superiors to adopt a different, and ultimately successful, approach to the siege of Chapultepec Castle.

Strengths An experienced and adaptable soldier.

Weaknesses A lover of overly elaborate strategies, Beauregard initially failed to coordinate his men.



33RD VIRGINIA VOLUNTEER INFANTRY REGIMENT KEY UNIT

Comprising ten companies, this volunteer regiment was raised in the wake of Virginia's secession from the United States in April 1861.

Strengths Displayed great initiative and courage to charge the Union guns.

Weaknesses Raw and inexperienced, suffering 43 dead and 140 wounded out of 450 men.



MISSISSIPPI RIFLE KEY WEAPON

The first US rifle to feature the more reliable percussion lock mechanism, though it was outdated by the time of the Civil War.

Strengths Effective up to 500 yards with a rate of fire of 2-3 rounds per minute.

Weaknesses An old-fashioned rifle compared to its contemporaries.

BATTLE OF HAMPTON ROADS

THE RISE OF ARMoured SHIPS AND THIS CLASH OF IRONCLADS EFFECTIVELY ENDED THE AGE OF SAIL AMONG THE WORLD'S NAVIES

WORDS MIKE HASKEW

SEWELL'S POINT, USA 8-9 MARCH 1862



■ The guns of Virginia and Monitor blaze away at close range during the Battle of Hampton Roads, March 9 1862

"THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF HEAVY CANNON, FIRING EXPLOSIVE SHELLS, SHOWERED DECKS WITH DEADLY SHRAPNEL AND SMASHED WOOD, SETTING ONCE DOMINANT VESSELS ABLAZE"

The early morning of 8 March 1862 passed quietly. Sailors' laundry hung from the masts and rigging of the Union warships tasked with blockade duty in Hampton Roads that Saturday. The American Civil War was in its second year and a vital component of the Union grand strategy, later known as the Anaconda Plan, was to blockade Confederate ports, strangling the lifeline of war material and other goods that might otherwise sustain the rebellion. Carrying out their assignment at Hampton Roads, where the James, Elizabeth and Nansemond Rivers empty into Chesapeake Bay and eventually the Atlantic Ocean, five Union warships lay at anchor, patiently waiting.

A few minutes after noon, a lookout aboard the 52-gun frigate USS Congress saw something strange on the horizon. Belching smoke from its funnel, a large, menacing warship was chugging slowly towards the Union flotilla. Reports had indicated for some time that the Confederates were building an ironclad at nearby Gosport Navy Yard. The sailor turned to a shipmate and said, "I wish you would take the glass and have a look over there sir. I believe that thing is a comin' down at last."

Iron usurps sail

For centuries, the billowing sails of ships of the line projected naval power across the globe, firing broadsides in decisive battles that determined the fates of nations. By the 19th century, however, technology had begun to render these wooden vessels obsolete. The destructive power of heavy cannon, firing

explosive shells, showered decks with deadly shrapnel and smashed wood, setting once dominant vessels ablaze.

The solution, it seemed, lay in the application of defensive armour that would offer protection against heavy-calibre shells. With the advent of the steam engine and the screw propeller, ships capable of bearing the additional weight of iron and steel plating were designed and built, and the fighting ship was freed from enslavement to the prevailing winds at sea.

Although early ironclads retained masts and rigging in the event they were necessary, an ironclad was defined as a steam-driven warship with iron or steel plating for protection and guns capable of firing explosive shells in addition to solid shot. By the 1830s, cannon of increasingly heavier calibre, such as the British 68-pounder, were becoming more common. The 206-millimetre 68-pounder was named for the weight of the projectile it fired, while the 32-pounder gun was often the heaviest weapon that wooden sailing ships could support.

The earliest innovation that led to the development of the ironclad was the steam engine, which revolutionised maritime propulsion; initially powering paddlewheel vessels and then giving way to the screw-driven ironclads that emerged in the mid-19th century. The steam engine enabled warships to manoeuvre both strategically and tactically during a naval engagement, regardless of the prevailing winds. Its advantages over sail were quickly realised so Britain and France embarked on rival building programmes, incorporating steam-powered warships as early as the 1840s.

The introduction of iron plating that covered an internal wooden framework was concurrent with the introduction of the steam engine, and by the time of the Crimean War the British and French navies had collaborated on the construction and deployment of armoured floating batteries. These slow, ponderous vessels were only capable of moving short distances under their own power. Nevertheless, the success of the floating batteries in support of wooden ships, during the bombardment of Russian fortifications, convinced the British, French and other major naval powers that the further development of armoured warships had merit.

Naval arms evolution

British shipbuilding capacity enabled the Royal Navy to maintain a quantitative advantage over the rival French in steam-powered warships during the 1850s. However, French shipbuilders sought a method of redressing the imbalance. Naval architect Henri Dupuy de Lôme suggested the development of the world's first oceangoing ironclad warship.

In 1859, the 36-gun ironclad Gloire was launched at the port of Toulon. The warship was constructed with a wooden hull 17 centimetres thick and covered in 12-centimetre-thick iron plating that overlapped. Before its installation, this combination of iron and timber was tested against the strongest naval guns then in use. Prior to the introduction of Gloire, ironclad warships had operated in coastal waters or traversed only short distances under their own power. Constructed as an oceangoing vessel, Gloire was a game-changer. The steam-powered



ironclad was capable of a top speed of 13 knots, and its range extended a full 4,000 kilometres, while maintaining an average speed of eight knots. Masts and rigging were installed as a secondary source of propulsion.

Confronted with the prospect that the French Navy might project ironclad muscle across the globe, the world's major naval powers had no choice but to respond. Suddenly, the British Admiralty was unable to take comfort in its advantage of wooden-hulled steam warships.

Within 13 months, the British response to Gloire was revealed. The 40-gun armoured frigate HMS Warrior was launched by the Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding Company in Blackwall, London, in December 1860. Warrior's hull was constructed of iron with armour 11.4 centimetres thick, and costly alterations were made to its design throughout the construction period, which nearly bankrupted the builder. Warrior's range extended to 3,900 kilometres at a sustained speed of 11 knots, while its steam engine delivered a top speed of 14 knots. Masts and sails remained as well.

Designed by Isaac Watts, chief constructor of the Royal Navy, and engineer Thomas Lloyd, HMS Warrior was built with the proven hull design of prior Royal Navy frigates. The Warrior design included a citadel or box-like structure amidships that protected most of the ship's armament and command positions. Operationally, its role differed from that of Gloire, which had been conceived to serve as a ship of the line. Rather than slugging it out with powerful broadsides, Warrior and other warships of her class were built as frigates with clipper

"THE OUTBREAK OF THE CIVIL WAR BROUGHT CONSTRUCTION OF AN IRONCLAD FLEET TO THE FOREFRONT OF NAVAL THOUGHT"

bows, using speed to dictate the circumstances of a naval confrontation to their own advantage.

Other European nations watched with great interest as the British and French navies modernised. By the early 1860s, at least five other countries had committed to the development of ironclad warships. Soon after the completion of Gloire, the French launched a second ironclad, Couronne. The Royal Navy accepted its second oceangoing ironclad, HMS Black Prince, into service in May 1862. By the end of that year, the British and French navies each had commissioned 16 ironclad warships.

American ironclads

Although the United States Navy had commissioned its first iron-hulled vessel, the Great Lakes steamer USS Michigan, in 1843, only the outbreak of the Civil War brought construction of an ironclad fleet to the forefront of naval thought – and at the time it was a necessity. While the majority of American naval vessels had remained with the Union, undoubtedly the Confederacy would embark on a campaign to build ironclads or purchase them from other countries. The Civil War was destined to become the proving ground for the ironclad as a weapon.

The first purpose-built ironclad warships of the US Navy were not completed until after the war had begun, and these were intended for the fight to gain control of the Mississippi

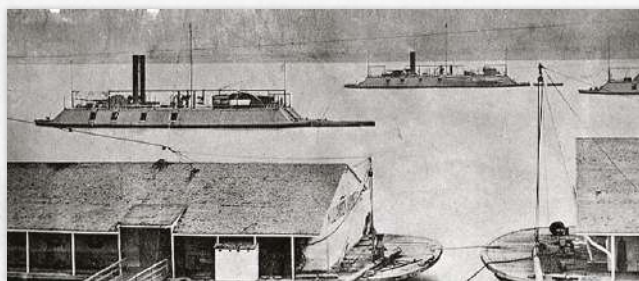
River. Captain James B Eads, an industrialist and inventor in St Louis, Missouri, proposed the construction of shallow-draft ironclad gunboats that could bombard Confederate fortifications, defeat wooden-hulled rebel warships and support land campaigns.

By late 1861, Eads had been authorised to build seven City-class ironclad gunboats from the keel up at his shipworks in Carondelet, Missouri, on the banks of the Mississippi. The gunboats were constructed rapidly as Eads utilised 4,000 workers around the clock, seven days a week. Supporting the offensives against Forts Henry and Donelson, Island No 10 and the key city of Vicksburg, the gunboats played prominent roles. During the naval Battle of Memphis in June 1862, the gunboats were instrumental in a decisive victory against Confederate forces that resulted in the surrender of the city.

The lead ship of Eads' City-class was the USS Cairo, which was commissioned in January 1862. With a draft of only 1.8 metres, Cairo weighed 512 tons with a length of 53 metres, a beam of nearly 16 metres and a top speed of only four knots. Its armour protection ranged from 1.8 to nearly nine centimetres. Heavily armed, Cairo carried a trio of 8-inch (203mm) smoothbore cannon along with as many as 11 rifled guns ranging from 12- to 42-pounders. Despite this impressive loadout, Cairo was sunk by a floating mine in October 1862.

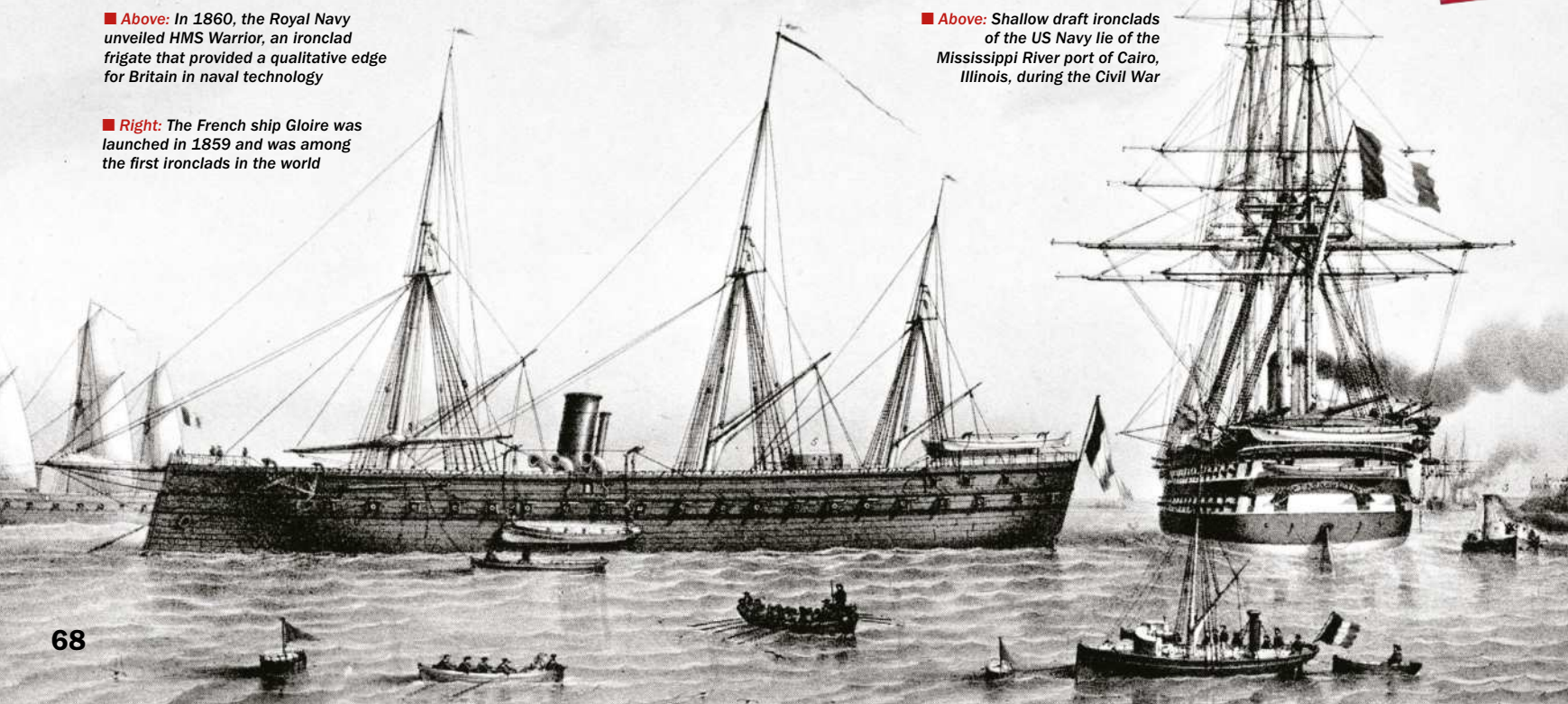


■ Above: In 1860, the Royal Navy unveiled HMS Warrior, an ironclad frigate that provided a qualitative edge for Britain in naval technology



■ Above: Shallow draft ironclads of the US Navy lie of the Mississippi River port of Cairo, Illinois, during the Civil War

■ Right: The French ship Gloire was launched in 1859 and was among the first ironclads in the world



THE 'FLOATING CHEESE BOX'

JOHN ERICSSON'S IRONCLAD MONITOR INCORPORATED NUMEROUS INNOVATIONS IN WARSHIP DESIGN, INCLUDING MORE THAN 40 INVENTIONS THAT WERE ELIGIBLE FOR PATENT

John Ericsson was a genius whose engineering prowess contributed to the invention of the screw propeller and the adaptation of the steam engine for use aboard ships. Despite this, the prospects for the success of his proposed ironclad, Monitor, were initially dim.

Ericsson's fortunes changed when Cornelius Bushnell carried his plans and a scale model of Monitor directly to President Abraham Lincoln, initially bypassing the adversarial Ironclad Board. With Lincoln's support, the project – which some had dubbed Ericsson's folly – would be able to take shape after all.

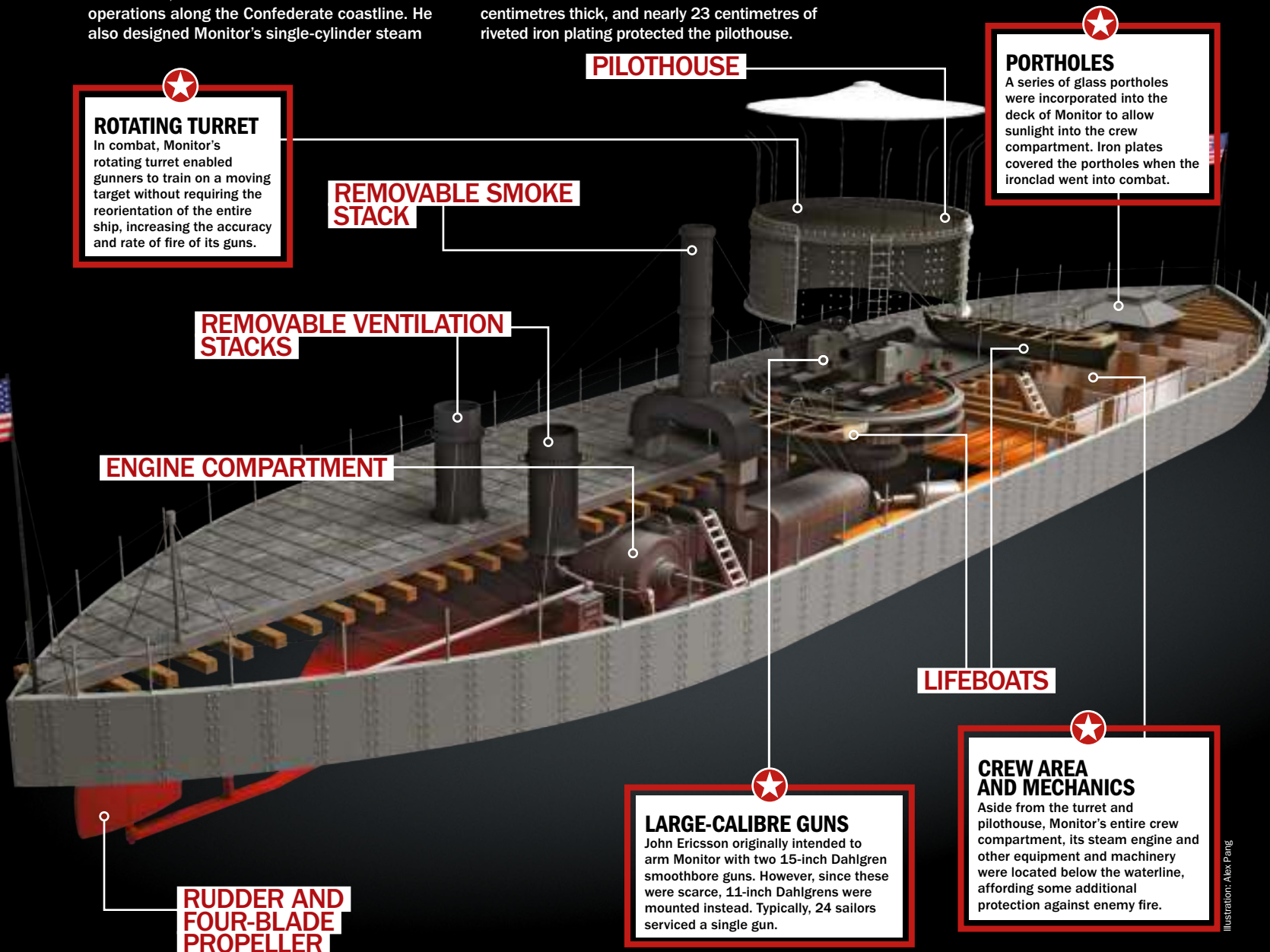
Monitor was a marvel of ingenuity. While the lower hull was in a much more traditional shape, the freeboard distance from the raft-like upper hull to the waterline only measured about two feet, contributing to its shallow draft of just 3.2 metres, which Ericsson believed ideal for operations along the Confederate coastline. He also designed Monitor's single-cylinder steam

engine, which generated a top speed of six knots, adequate for coastal operations.

Constructed with 20 centimetres of layered armour, Monitor's rotating turret was the forerunner of the modern naval turret, influencing warship design for the next century. Roughly six metres in diameter and 2.75 metres high, it was powered by two small engines controlling a complex of gears and completed a rotation in just less than 23 seconds.

Monitor was less than 55 metres long, about two-thirds the length of its adversary CSS Virginia. With a beam of roughly 12.5 metres, the ironclad was relatively compact. Its low silhouette presented a minimal target for enemy warships and shore batteries. Well protected at the waterline, Monitor's armoured belt thickness ranged from 7.6 to 12.7 centimetres, while the iron skin covering its turret was 20 centimetres thick. Its deck armour was 2.5 centimetres thick, and nearly 23 centimetres of riveted iron plating protected the pilothouse.

"CONSTRUCTED WITH 20 CENTIMETRES OF LAYERED ARMOUR, MONITOR'S ROTATING TURRET WAS THE FORERUNNER OF THE MODERN NAVAL TURRET, INFLUENCING WARSHIP DESIGN FOR THE NEXT CENTURY"



ROTATING TURRET

In combat, Monitor's rotating turret enabled gunners to train on a moving target without requiring the reorientation of the entire ship, increasing the accuracy and rate of fire of its guns.

REMOVABLE SMOKE STACK

REMOVABLE VENTILATION STACKS

ENGINE COMPARTMENT

PILOTHOUSE

PORTHOLES

A series of glass portholes were incorporated into the deck of Monitor to allow sunlight into the crew compartment. Iron plates covered the portholes when the ironclad went into combat.

LIFEBOATS

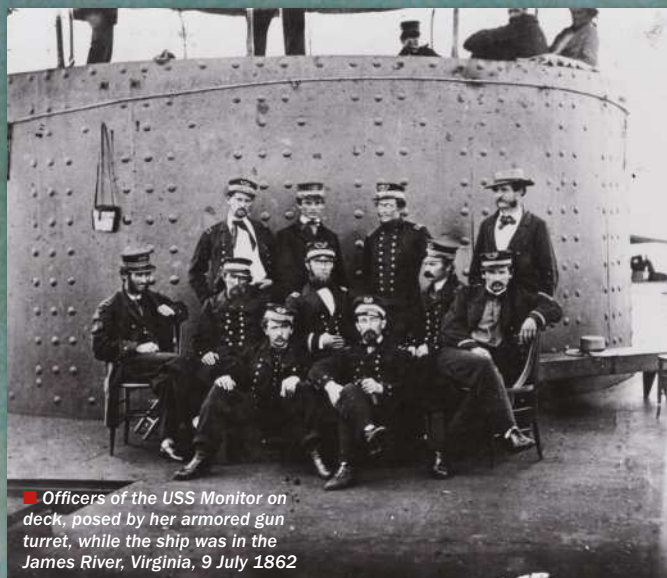
LARGE-CALIBRE GUNS

John Ericsson originally intended to arm Monitor with two 15-inch Dahlgren smoothbore guns. However, since these were scarce, 11-inch Dahlgrens were mounted instead. Typically, 24 sailors serviced a single gun.

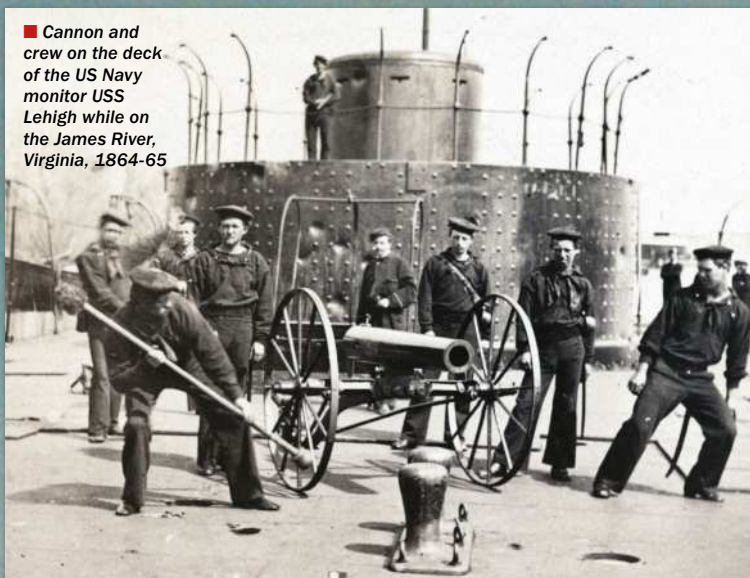
CREW AREA AND MECHANICS

Aside from the turret and pilothouse, Monitor's entire crew compartment, its steam engine and other equipment and machinery were located below the waterline, affording some additional protection against enemy fire.

RUDDER AND FOUR-BLADE PROPELLER



■ Officers of the USS Monitor on deck, posed by her armored gun turret, while the ship was in the James River, Virginia, 9 July 1862



■ Cannon and crew on the deck of the US Navy monitor USS Lehigh while on the James River, Virginia, 1864-65

The first ironclad built for the Confederate Navy was the CSS Manassas, converted from the captured steam icebreaker Enoch Train at Algiers, Louisiana, near New Orleans. The steam-powered Manassas, armed with a single cannon and an iron ram, was the first vessel of its kind to engage enemy warships during a raid up the Mississippi River from New Orleans in October 1861, which came to be known as the Battle of the Head of Passes.

Birth of CSS Virginia

When Union forces abandoned the Gosport Navy Yard in the spring of 1861, several ships that could not be removed were put to the torch. One of these, the steam frigate USS Merrimack, burned to the waterline. However, the remainder of the lower hull and its steam powerplant were relatively undamaged.

The Secretary of the Confederate navy, Stephen Mallory, advocated the building and acquisition of ironclad warships to counter the Union naval superiority, defend key ports and possibly even break the Union blockade. Mallory authorised the conversion of the Merrimack to an ironclad. This was completed nine months later, on 7 March 1862, just a day before the Battle of Hampton Roads began.

Lieutenants John M Brooke and John L Porter and William P Williamson, chief engineer of the Confederate Navy, supervised the redesign and

construction of the ironclad, which was renamed CSS Virginia. A casemated, armoured gunboat, Virginia was nearly 84 metres long with a beam of 15.6 metres, draft of 6.4 metres and weight of approximately 4,000 tons. Iron plating from 2.5 to ten centimetres protected the vessel. Armament included a pair of 12-pounder howitzers, half a dozen 229mm smoothbore Dahlgren cannon and four rifled guns, two of 178mm and two of 160mm. A menacing iron ram was fitted to its bow. Powered by a pair of steam engines, Virginia was capable of a top speed of only six knots.

The making of monitor

During a joint session of the US Congress held 4 July 1861, a report was read detailing the construction of a Confederate ironclad warship that might threaten the supremacy of the Union Navy and even the security of northern cities on the Potomac River, including Washington, DC.

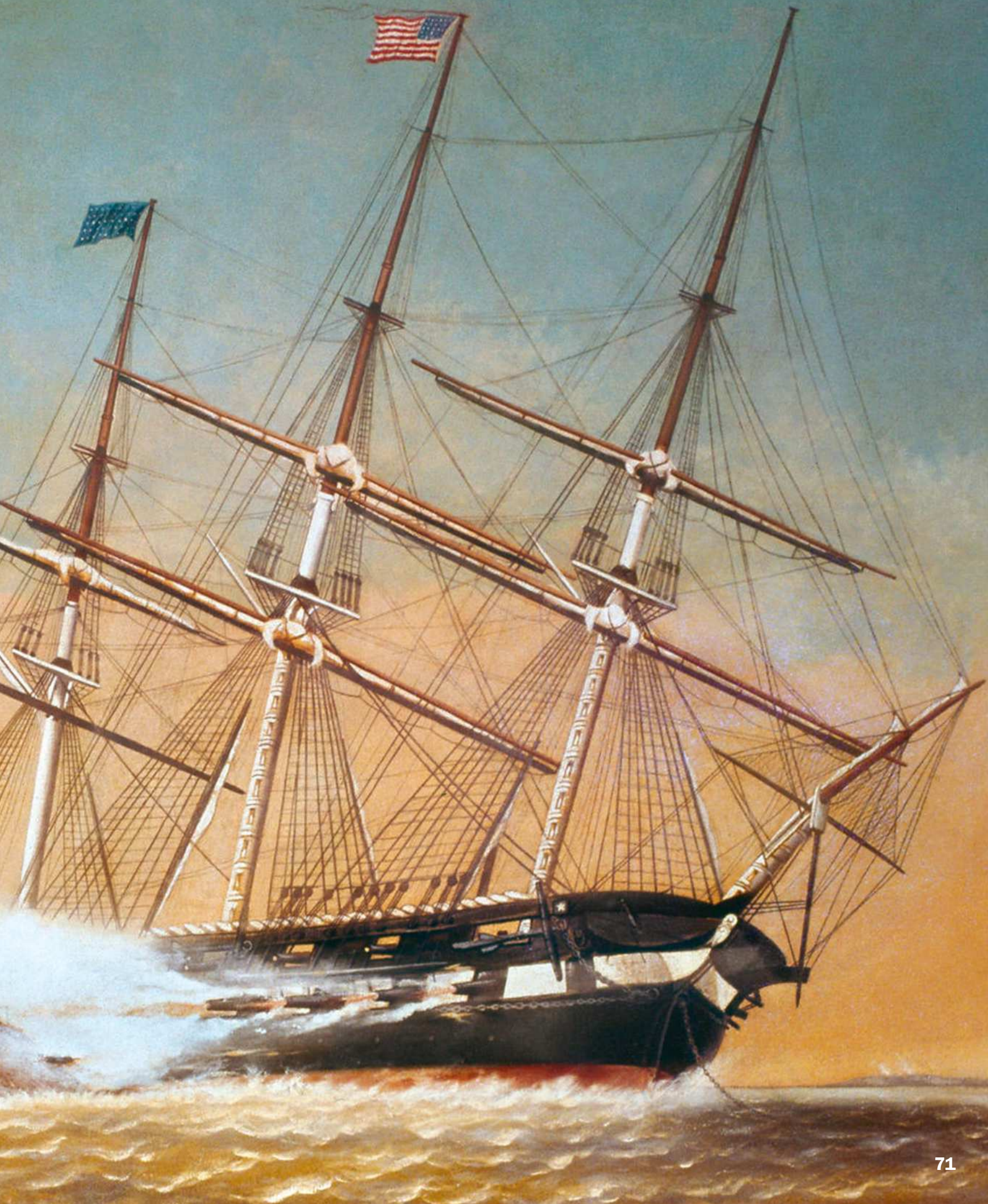
Committed to imposing its blockade of Confederate ports, the US Navy was feverishly constructing 47 wooden warships, however, the news of the rebel ironclad was alarming. Within weeks, Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles had requested proposals for armoured warship designs, an 'Ironclad Board' of naval officers had been organised to judge the entries and \$1.5 million had been appropriated for the construction of the new vessels.

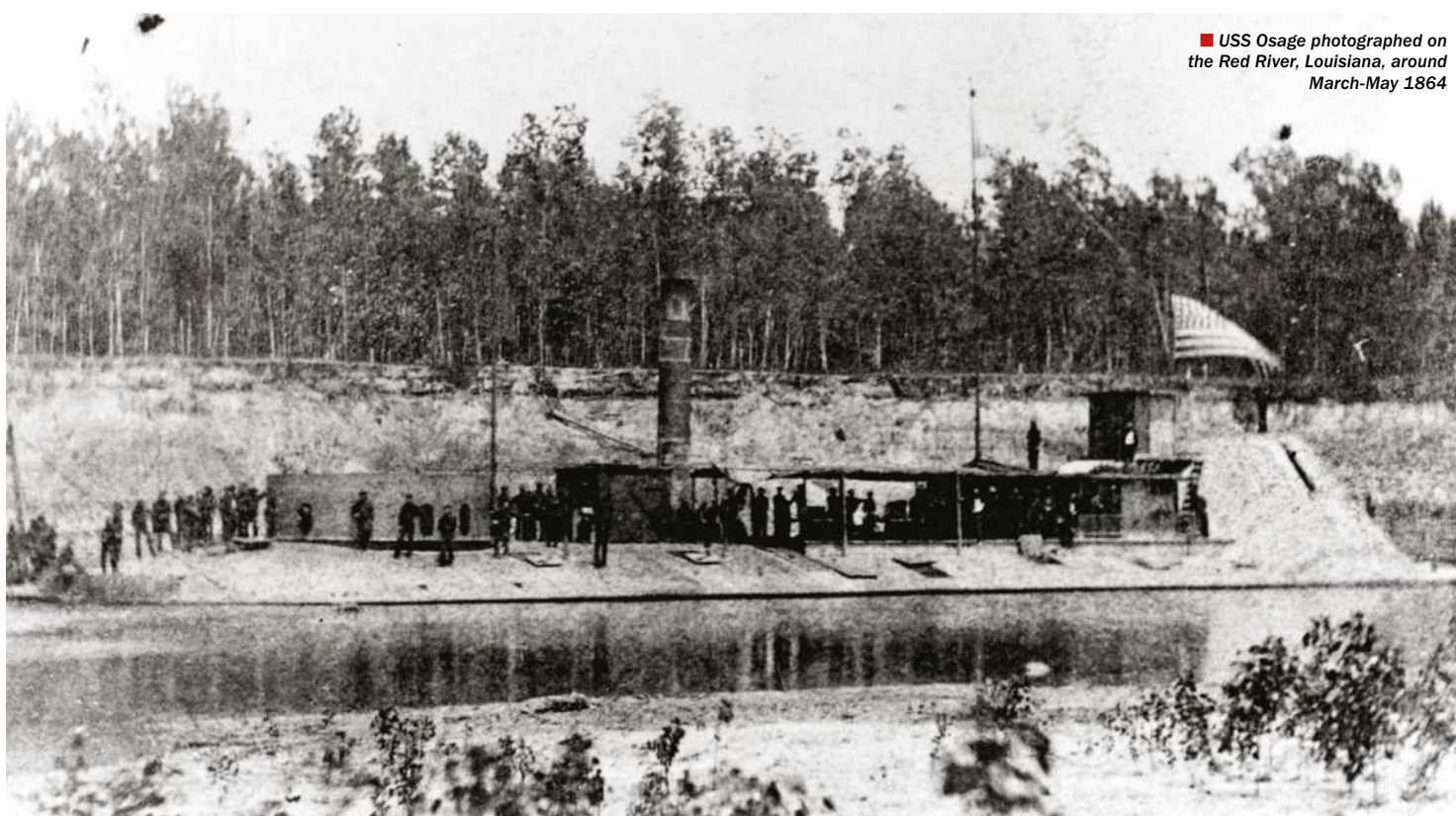
In August, Swedish-born inventor and engineer John Ericsson wrote a letter directly to President Abraham Lincoln offering his services in the design and construction of an armoured "vessel for destruction of the rebel fleet at Norfolk and for scouring the Southern rivers and inlets of all craft protected by rebel batteries". The letter was intercepted before it reached Lincoln, and naval officers rejected Ericsson's offer out of hand.

When the Ironclad Board met the following month, two contracts were approved for broadside ironclads with armour fastened to their wooden hulls. These were christened USS Galena and USS New Ironsides. Cornelius Bushnell, one of the designers of Galena, was concerned about his ship's stability and consulted with Ericsson. During their meeting, Bushnell was asked by Ericsson to take a look at his own ironclad design, a radical departure from more conventional schemes.

Ericsson's design was simple enough, a floating raft with a single, round turret at its centre and a small pilothouse towards the front of the vessel. Bushnell was intrigued and took the plans to Secretary Welles. After reviewing the plans, President

"THE STEAM-POWERED MANASSAS, ARMED WITH A SINGLE CANNON AND AN IRON RAM AFFIXED TO ITS BOW, WAS THE FIRST VESSEL OF ITS KIND TO ENGAGE ENEMY WARSHIPS DURING A RAID UP THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER"





■ USS Osage photographed on the Red River, Louisiana, around March-May 1864

Lincoln offered additional support, and in October 1861, the Ironclad Board awarded a third contract for “an ironclad, shot-proof steam battery.” Although there were sceptics, time was of the essence and Ericsson had promised a swift delivery, agreeing to reimburse the government’s \$275,000 investment in the enterprise if it happened to fail.

Construction was completed rapidly at Continental Iron Works in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, New York. Some accounts assert that the basic project was finished within 98 days, and USS Monitor was eventually commissioned on 25 February 1862. Its innovative rotating turret was armed with two 11-inch (280mm) Dahlgren guns, and Monitor’s unique profile soon earned it the affectionate nickname of ‘cheese box on a raft’.

Showdown at Hampton Roads

Rumours swirled that the Confederate ironclad at Gosport would soon sally forth to do battle with the blockading wooden ships of the US Navy in Hampton Roads. Mechanical issues delayed Monitor’s deployment, but these were corrected quickly and the ironclad departed Brooklyn for Chesapeake Bay on 6 March 1862, under the command of Captain John Worden, who hoped to destroy the Confederate Virginia at its moorings. Battered by heavy seas, Monitor reached Hampton Roads on the night of 8 March, buoying the morale of the sailors aboard the blockading ships as the strange craft crept into view. These men were shaken – Virginia had already come to call.

Hours earlier, the Confederate ironclad, escorted by five steamers of the rebel navy,

had sortied down the Elizabeth River. Its commander, Flag Officer Franklin Buchanan, was determined to wreak havoc among the wooden warships of the enemy. When the iron monster was sighted, the alarm was raised and sailors scrambled to their stations.

Franklin ordered Virginia to steer toward the sloop of war USS Cumberland, anchored in the channel near the town of Newport News. Soon the Confederate ironclad’s guns were blazing away at the wooden enemy, whose sailors manned their weapons and replied. Gathering momentum, Virginia rammed Cumberland on the starboard side just below the waterline.

As water rushed into the gaping hole, Buchanan tried to back away from the stricken sloop, but Virginia’s ram was stuck fast. For a few agonising moments, it appeared that both



THE DAWN OF AN IRON AGE

Ironclad warships of numerous designs and varied functions began to dominate the world’s major naval forces in the mid-19th century

Gloire

Displacing 5,529 tons, the French Navy’s Gloire was the world’s first oceangoing ironclad. Entering service in 1859, Gloire made wooden ships of the line obsolete, only to be eclipsed itself within a year.



HMS Warrior

Launched in 1860, HMS Warrior, the Royal Navy’s first oceangoing armoured frigate, was constructed with an iron hull. Within a decade, newer designs had begun to relegate Warrior to second-line duties.



CSS Tennessee

The ironclad ram Tennessee was commissioned in February 1864, even as the Civil War was going badly for the Confederacy. Tennessee was captured during the Battle of Mobile Bay.



USS Galena

Constructed with armour plating covering its wooden hull, the broadside ironclad USS Galena was commissioned in 1862 and sustained serious damage duelling shore batteries during the Battle of Drewry’s Bluff.



■ The American Civil War saw the first engagement between ironclad vessels



■ Left: Swedish-born engineer John Ericsson revolutionised warship design and construction with his ironclad USS Monitor, dubbed a 'cheese box on a raft'

ships might sink. Suddenly, the ram broke off the ironclad's bow and Buchanan pulled free.

Cumberland sank rapidly, taking 121 crewmen to watery graves while at least 20 others were wounded. The sloop's gunners bravely fired at the ironclad, their shells striking home but bouncing off the Confederate vessel's armoured veneer. Buchanan admired the courage of the Union gunners and later wrote that they were, "gallantly fighting her guns as long as they were above water."

Sailors aboard the nearby Congress were aghast. In the confusion of evasive manoeuvres, their ship and the 44-gun steam frigate USS Minnesota had run aground. Buchanan turned Virginia toward the James River, and it appeared for a moment that the wounded behemoth might retire. Then, a deliberate turn toward Congress dispelled any thought that the fight was over.

For two hours, Virginia's guns raked Congress, killing and wounding scores of men before the survivors struck their colours. Although it was plain that the ship had surrendered, Union shore batteries opened fire on Virginia. Buchanan flew into a rage, began to fire a rifle at the Union shore batteries from Virginia's top deck and ordered Congress set afire. He was wounded in the thigh by a Union sharpshooter, and command of Virginia fell to its executive officer, Lieutenant Catesby ap Roger Jones.

Minnesota squatted helplessly aground, easy prey for Virginia. But by late afternoon, Jones was concerned that the ironclad had sustained

some damage and might be stranded as the tide began to ebb. He was sure that Virginia could return the following day to finish off Minnesota.

As Monitor entered Chesapeake Bay, its crew heard the sound of distant cannon. By the time the Union ironclad reached the scene, the day's fighting had ended. Congress burned until after midnight, when the flames reached its powder magazine and erupted like a volcano. Efforts to dislodge Minnesota were fruitless, and Monitor took up a position to defend the wooden frigate if the battle was renewed the next day.

Fog shrouded Hampton Roads on the morning of 9 March 1862, but just after 8am, Virginia had chugged within range and fired a salvo at Minnesota. Several Confederate sailors noticed an odd-looking vessel approaching. In a few minutes, the world's first naval battle between two ironclad warships was joined.

Manoeuvring to within yards of Virginia, Worden gave the order for Monitor's gunners to open fire. Virginia turned a full broadside against the new threat, and its fury rattled every rivet in Monitor's turret. After the battle, dents and scars from Virginia's repeated broadsides offered evidence of the fight, but Monitor held together. For four hours, the two ironclads hammered each other. Monitor's gunners were vexed when they were unable to orient themselves toward the target based on Worden's commands amid thick smoke. The rotating turret did not stop easily, and soon enough the gunners were actually firing on-the-fly as it turned.

"SEVERAL CONFEDERATE SAILORS NOTICED AN ODD-LOOKING VESSEL APPROACHING. IN A FEW MINUTES, THE WORLD'S FIRST NAVAL BATTLE BETWEEN TWO IRONCLAD WARSHIPS WAS JOINED"



THE END OF THE AMERICAN IRONCLAD

Advancing naval technology left the last of the US Navy's ironclads in reserve or designated as scrap prior to 1900

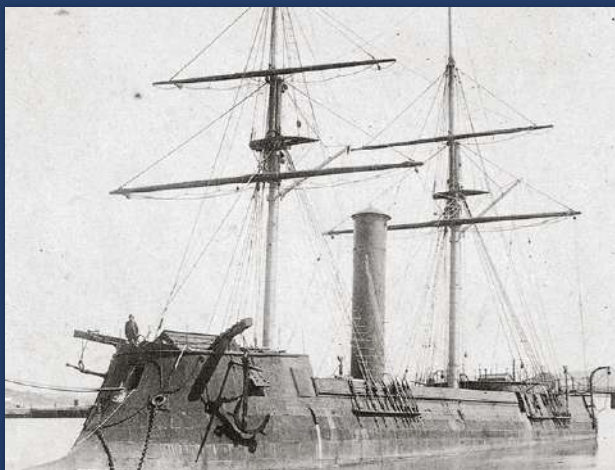
As the American Civil War drew to a close, the US Navy was second only to the British Royal Navy in strength, with more than 50,000 personnel and 700 warships, dozens of them patterned after the iconic ironclad USS Monitor. At least 36 of the 60 ironclads that had been authorised during the war on the basic Monitor blueprint had been constructed by that point.

From there, however, the United States' navy entered a period of decline. By the 1870s, most of the Civil War-era ironclad monitors had been retired. A decade later, a programme of modernisation led to the construction of several protected cruisers, so called because armour decking protected internal compartments from exploding shells. The Navy Act of 1890 authorised the construction of the US Navy's first designated battleships.

Although it did not see action during the Civil War, the French-built ironclad ram CSS Stonewall, intended for the Confederate Navy, was purchased by the United States from the Spanish government in Cuba in the spring of 1865. The ironclad was sold to Japan four years later as that nation sought to modernise its navy. Renamed Kotetsu, it participated in the Battle of Miyako Bay on 25 March 1869, during the Boshin War. Nearly 20 years later, Kotetsu was scrapped as Japan was well on its way to acquiring a modern navy that would one day confront the United States for pre-eminence in the Pacific.



■ Commissioned in 1895, the protected cruiser USS Olympia gained fame during the Battle of Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War



■ Photographed in 1865, the ironclad CSS Stonewall was sold to Japan and renamed Kotetsu, serving with the Imperial Navy for two decades





■ Another depiction of the famous Battle of Hampton Roads, where the ironclad Merrimack rammed into the Cumberland

Just a few minutes after noon, one of Virginia's rifled stern guns fired directly at Monitor's pilothouse, striking home from a mere nine metres distant. Worden, who had been peering through the vision slit at the time, was temporarily blinded. After giving the order for the ironclad to sheer away from the fight so that the damage could be assessed, he turned over command to the executive officer Lieutenant Samuel Dana Greene.

Lieutenant Jones, who was in command of Virginia after Buchanan had been wounded, interpreted Monitor's breakaway manoeuvre as one of retreat. Virginia had also taken a pounding. Its crew was exhausted, several sailors were wounded and the tide was beginning to recede. Jones headed for Gosport. From Monitor's damaged pilothouse, Greene saw his enemy turn for home and believed the Confederates had broken off the fight.

Although both sides claimed victory, the first battle of ironclad warships ended in a draw. Still, naval officers and shipbuilders around the world took note. Forever afterward, navies of iron and steel would rule the waves. The great sailing ships had been relegated to the past in an afternoon.

Lessons at Lissa

The first fleet action between ironclad warships occurred at Lissa in the Adriatic Sea on 20 July 1866, during the Third Italian War of Independence. An Austrian fleet that included seven ironclad frigates decisively defeated an Italian task force comprised of 12 ironclads. Both fleets included wooden-hulled ships.

As the battle wore on, it became apparent that neither the Austrians nor the Italians possessed the firepower to inflict serious damage on the other's armoured ships. Both sides resorted to ramming and ultimately the Italians lost a pair of ironclads. Although Lissa was one of the last naval battles to include ramming as an offensive tactic, its influence resulted in a revival of the anachronistic ram, which was installed on armoured ships of numerous navies through the 1880s.

Ironclad aftermath

The USS Monitor served as a prototype for two subsequent classes of US Navy ironclads. The Passaic and Canonicus classes included coastal and riverine monitors with improved construction elements, such as thicker armour and pilothouses relocated to the turret rather than situated on the deck in the line of fire. The Canonicus-class Tecumseh led the Union naval attack at Mobile Bay in 1864 and was sunk by a floating mine, inspiring Admiral David Farragut to utter the famous line, "Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!"

A few of the monitors built for the US Navy during the Civil War remained in service through the Spanish-American War and the turn of the 20th century. As for armoured warships of traditional design, masts and rigging inevitably faded away. In the 1870s, iron gave way to steel as the primary warship material.

Casemated armament evolved to gun barbettes and rotating turrets that became familiar along with a new generation of warships, including armoured or protected cruisers and later modern battleships, cruisers and destroyers. Breech-loading guns supplanted the muzzleloaders, barrels were lengthened for greater muzzle velocity and armour-piercing shells were developed by the early 1900s.

Admiral Horatio Nelson, the Royal Navy's hero of the epic Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, once said, "No captain can do very wrong if he places his ship alongside that of the enemy." The evolution of the ironclad rendered that statement an allusion to a bygone era. While Monitor and Virginia had slugged away at close range, more powerful guns eventually led to naval duels during which combatants were literally miles apart.

The rapid advance of technology during the ironclad era had resulted in some warships becoming functionally obsolescent as soon as they were launched. Within half a century of the encounter at Hampton Roads, capital ships of steel mounting heavy guns in multiple turrets were thundering during World War I.



HEAT OF THE DAY

All three days of the battle were fought in incredibly hot weather, during the height of the Pennsylvanian summer. This meant both sides were suffering and struggling to maintain composure in these difficult conditions, making water as precious as ammo to many soldiers.



DESPERATE DEFENCE

On more than one occasion during the battle, the Union line was tested to its limits. With Confederate attacks springing up at various points in great numbers, General Meade was forced to rapidly reorganise battalions across the field.



ABSENT CAVALRY

Though they engaged on the first day of the battle, much of the cavalry on either side was occupied away from Gettysburg. This changed the dynamic of the battle significantly, as General Lee's scout reports on the Union movements were proven incorrect, which affected his decision.

BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG

IT SAW THE LARGEST NUMBER OF CASUALTIES OF ANY BATTLE IN THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR AND IS CONSIDERED BY MANY AS THE TURNING POINT, BUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENED OVER THOSE FATEFUL THREE DAYS?

PENNSYLVANIA, USA 1-3 JULY 1863

At noon on 2 July 1863, the heat of the summer day had already sapped the energy from every man – Union or Confederate – unable to find a piece of shade. Nearby, the deserted town of Gettysburg lay eerily quiet after the desperate fighting of the previous day, as the Union men had beat a hasty retreat through its streets and into the hills. General George Meade had steadied his men, forming up a tight defence that he now hoped would be enough to block his enemy's path to Washington, DC, the political heart of the United States. As shots were heard breaking out towards the Union's left flank, he realised that the attack had begun, but couldn't have any idea just how bloody the day would prove to be.

During the previous month, Robert E Lee, the Confederate's finest commander and arguably the greatest general of the American Civil War, had taken his Army of Northern Virginia, more than 72,000 men, to the north. Penetrating deep into Union territory, he predicted, would boost support for those calling for a peace deal to be brokered between the North and the South. A victory in this invasion so deep into the North would also put great pressure on President Lincoln, and could even allow Lee to march on Washington, DC, itself.

The relatively small town of Gettysburg, southern Pennsylvania, was only significant in that it saw the convergence of several key roads leading to the south, the north and elsewhere, from where Lee saw an opportunity to spread his army. Major General Joseph Hooker, commanding the Army of the Potomac, had shadowed Lee in his march north, following the rebel army to engage and destroy it.

Three days before the battle, however, he was relieved of his command and General Meade was put in his place. The new general's sudden rise through the ranks earned him widespread mistrust among his officers, who questioned his ability to lead them effectively.

The two armies met at Gettysburg on 1 July, with troops engaging at first in light skirmishes that soon escalated into a pitched battle, as limited Union regiments defended their line against advancing Confederates. With General Meade not yet on the field, Union officers took the initiative to control the defence of Gettysburg, but disaster struck when the senior officer, Major General John F Reynolds, was struck down by a sharpshooter's bullet.

Though they defended bravely, and delayed Lee's troops as much as they could, the Union soldiers were forced to run for their lives through Gettysburg's streets and up into the hills to the south, where a defensive line of artillery had been established. As more reinforcements arrived during the late afternoon and during the night, the position on the high ground was fortified further and the Union generals could only wait to see what General Lee would do the next day.

With Gettysburg surrounded and taken on the first day, albeit with the lives of more men than he would have cared to give, General Lee was now as confident as he usually was of victory. He planned to outflank the Union position, killing its superior position on the high ground and forcing Meade to retreat from the field. The next two days would decide the fate of the United States, and would cost the lives of thousands of Americans.

BLOODIEST BATTLE

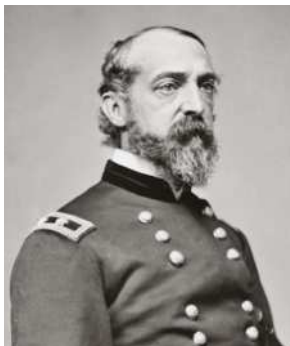
Gettysburg saw the highest number of casualties of the Civil War, with more than 51,000 killed, missing, captured or wounded during the three-day slaughter. It spelled the turning point in the war, and Abraham Lincoln gave his famous address from the site of the battle four months later.

“THOUGH THEY DEFENDED BRAVELY, AND DELAYED LEE'S TROOPS AS MUCH AS THEY COULD, THE UNION SOLDIERS WERE FORCED TO RUN FOR THEIR LIVES THROUGH GETTYSBURG'S STREETS”



UNION ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

TROOPS 95,000



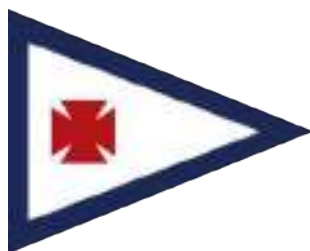
GENERAL GEORGE GORDON MEADE

LEADER

Meade was appointed general of the Union Army of the Potomac just days before the battle.

Strengths Was able to make full use of his subordinates' many skills.

Weakness Without the full backing of his troops, he failed to control many of his officers.



5TH CORPS

KEY UNIT

The stalwart defenders of Little Round Top.

Strengths Drawn mainly from Lincoln's second call for volunteers, these will die for the Union cause.

Weakness Under-supplied and with stretched lines, they faced greater difficulties than just the enemy before them.

SPRINGFIELD MODEL 1861

KEY WEAPON

It was the most commonly used rifled musket of the American Civil War.

Strengths Long range, along with fairly good accuracy.

Weakness A slight arcing in the bullet's trajectory proved problematic when used by novices.



01 FORMING THE DEFENSIVE LINE

After the retreat from Gettysburg on 1 July, General Meade forms his troops into the shape of an inverted fish hook – with the curve facing north in the direction of the town and a long straight line facing the Confederates to the west. With the high ground and with each unit close enough to support one another, Meade is confident his Federal troops can hold off any attacks.



02 SICKLES MOVES TO ATTACK

Major General Daniel Sickles moves his Third Corps, which holds the Union's left flank, to higher ground towards the west to an area known as Devil's Den, giving his artillery a better position. General Meade sends in his Fifth Corps to support Sickles.



03 LEE ORDERS THE FIRST ATTACK

With the bulk of his forces along Seminary Ridge, parallel to the Union's fish hook, General Lee orders Lieutenant General Longstreet to attack the enemy's left flank, General Ambrose Hill is to attack the centre, while General Richard Ewell threatens the enemy's right. Lee plans for his forces to roll up on the Union left, flanking them entirely.



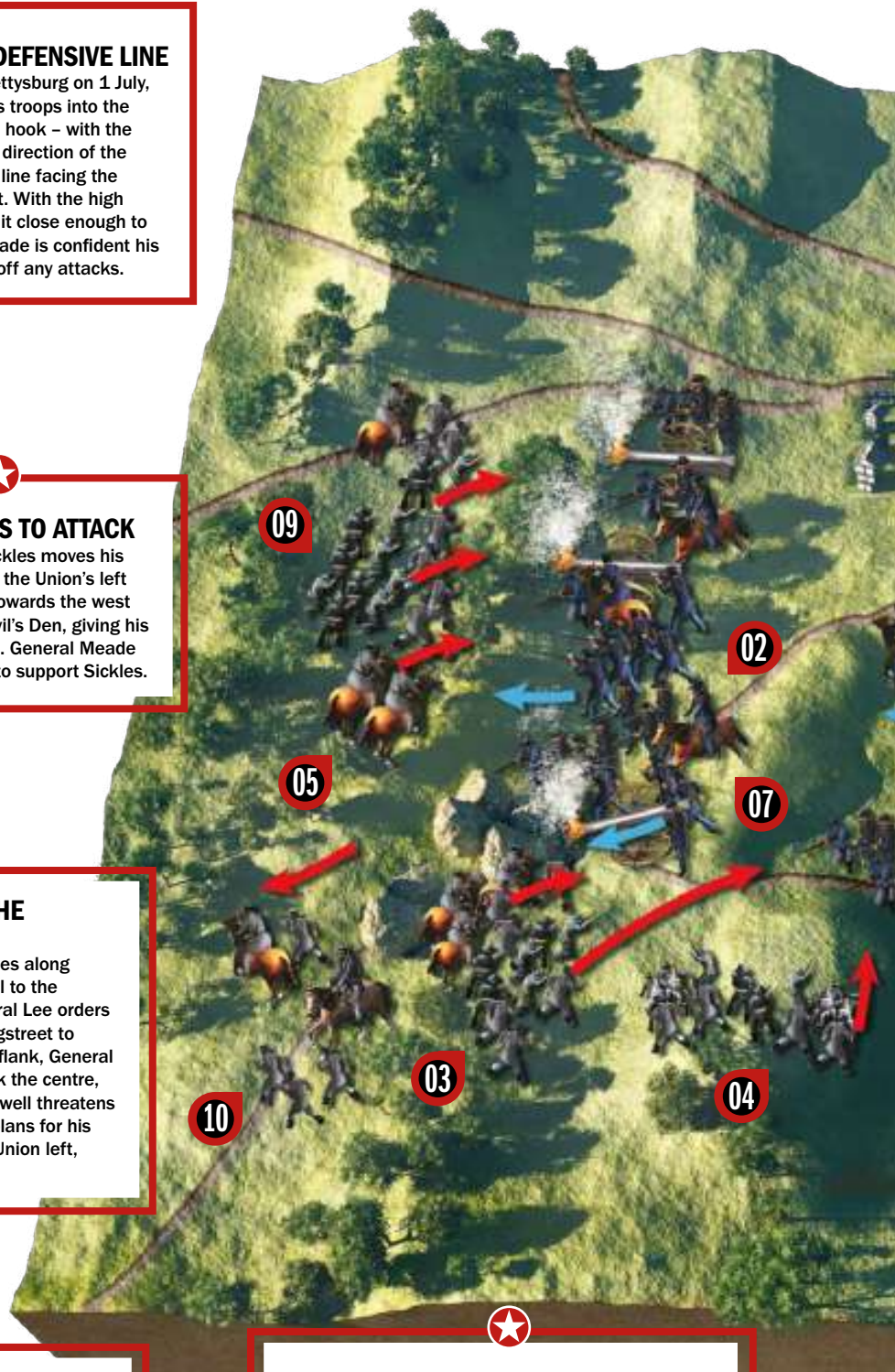
04 LONGSTREET ADVANCES

Moving towards the Union's left flank, Longstreet's men encounter the Union Third Corps at the Devil's Den, a deadly position perfect for sharpshooting. Texas and Alabama regiments move towards Little Round Top to flank the Den.



05 BITTER FIGHTING IN THE DEN

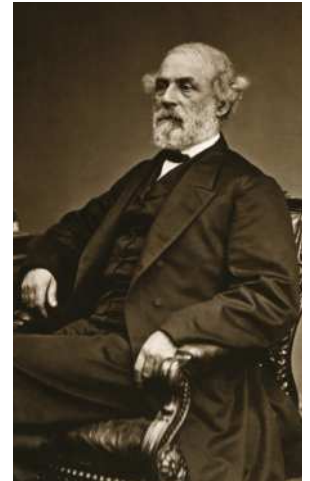
The Devil's Den changes hands several times, with neither side able to hold it for long before being forced to retreat. About 1,800 casualties result from the fighting here. Further to the right of the Confederate attack, Alabama and Texas regiments begin assaulting Little Round Top, but encounter elements of the Fifth Corps General Meade has sent to support Sickles.





CONFEDERATE ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

TROOPS 72,000



GENERAL ROBERT E LEE LEADER

One of the finest leaders of the American Civil War and a seasoned soldier.

Strengths Substantially experienced in battle.

Weakness Left largely uninformed due to a lack of reconnaissance.



CONFEDERATE SHARPSHOOTERS

KEY UNIT

They were the elite marksmen of the Civil War.

Strengths Precise shooting could take out enemy officers with ease.

Weakness Didn't have the numbers of rank-and-file troops.

WHITWORTH RIFLE KEY WEAPON

Arguably the world's first sniper rifle, it was manufactured in the United Kingdom.

Strengths Incredibly long range, could hit targets from up to one mile away.

Weakness Far less effective in the hands of a raw recruit.



© Nicole Fuller



10 GENERAL LEE RETREATS

Confederate cavalry finally arrive on the battlefield but are too late to have any significant impact on proceedings. General Lee remains on the field to organise a rearguard for his army's retreat, anticipating a Union general advance on the rebels. However, General Meade keeps his army on Cemetery Ridge and Cemetery Hill.

09 PICKETT'S CHARGE

In the last major Confederate attack of the battle, General George Pickett is ordered to assault the Union centre with his relatively fresh division with others under the command of General Longstreet. After a lengthy artillery bombardment from both sides, 12,000 Confederate soldiers attack, but are eventually broken.

08 THE ARMIES REGROUP

As night falls on 2 July, there are more than 14,000 casualties of the battlefield. The Union now holds a defensive line along Cemetery Ridge, Cemetery Hill and south to Little Round Top. In the evening, Confederate attacks on the right Union flank are barely repulsed as the defences are under-strength from supporting Sickles' position during the day. The next day, more attacks on Culp's Hill and around Spangler's Spring on the Union right flank are repulsed.

07 THE END OF THE SECOND DAY

Sickles's Third Corps is pressed hard by the Confederate attacks, with the Wheatfield and Devil's Den finally falling into enemy hands. Sickles is wounded by a cannonball to the leg as his men retreat to Cemetery Ridge, where they hold. A huge gap in the Union centre emerges after the Third Corps retreats, so the line is hastily reorganised to prevent the army being split in two.

06 BATTLE FOR LITTLE ROUND TOP

With ammunition running low and having taken heavy casualties, Colonel Joshua Chamberlain orders his men to fix bayonets and charge the Confederate troops. The attack routs the attacking rebels.

THE PLAINS WARS

SETTLERS ON THE GREAT PLAINS MEANT TROUBLE FOR THE NATIVE AMERICANS WHO LIVED THERE

WORDS ALICE BARNES-BROWN

THE GREAT PLAINS, USA 1850S-1870S

Ever since the arrival of white settlers, Native Americans had been defending themselves – and their property – from unwanted encroachment. In the early days, the white settlers were confined to lands east of the Mississippi River. So-called 'Plains Indians' such as the Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho were beyond the frontier and, aside from the odd military outpost, did not have many major clashes with the white settlers in the area.

But the dangerous doctrine of 'Manifest Destiny' – the idea that the US would inevitably expand all the way to the Pacific Ocean – meant that the settlers soon set their sights across the mighty river.

Initially, white Americans had little desire to settle on the plains themselves. In the 1840s, gold had been discovered in California and the Oregon Trail was becoming accessible to

migrants, so most were heading for the West Coast. But when these travellers started stealing Native American resources along the way, the tribes that inhabited the area understandably grew resentful, and sometimes attacked the wagon routes. The US responded with brutal reprisals.

Native American tribes sometimes allied with each other to double their strength but during the Plains Wars they were also plagued with infighting, which was detrimental to their efforts in defeating the US army.

What follows are six of the most prominent battles between tribes and the US military, but there were far more conflicts than these. Not all of them got to the stage of all-out battle, but they still had far-reaching consequences for the people involved, and ultimately led to the forced movement of 'Plains Indians' onto the barren reservations.



■ Native Americans attack the New Ulm settlement of Minnesota in 1862

“WHEN THESE TRAVELLERS STARTED STEALING NATIVE AMERICAN RESOURCES ALONG THE WAY, THE TRIBES THAT INHABITED THE AREA UNDERSTANDABLY GREW RESENTFUL”



BIRCH COULEE

When US troops let their guard down, the Sioux took advantage

2 SEPTEMBER 1862

VICTORY: NATIVE AMERICANS

The Sioux had been signing treaties with the US government since the beginning of the 19th century as they exchanged lands for money and food. But when the Civil War came, almost destroying the US, it had a knock-on effect for the Sioux; their funds and food supply had suddenly been cut, leaving them in a dire situation.

In August 1862, a small band of Sioux stole some eggs from the settlers, but when they were discovered the situation escalated. Five settlers were killed in the tussle and, in part owing to this surprise triumph over the whites, Native Americans were spurred on to continue the attacks.

One such fight was the Battle of Birch Coulee in September 1862. 170 American soldiers went on a mission to bury bodies of settlers killed by Native Americans, not knowing that Sioux scouts were watching them. After being lulled into a false sense of security, the Sioux surrounded their poorly-guarded encampment under the cover of darkness.

They attacked at dawn. A relief party was sent, but it came too late to stop the bloodshed. The Sioux left after heavy artillery fire, but by then 13 men and almost 90 horses were already dead. 50 more men were injured.

The victory was not to last. The Sioux surrendered later that month and mass trials of Sioux followed, with over 300 being sentenced to death. Additionally, over 1,500 Sioux women and children were held on an internment camp during the winter, and hundreds of those died.

■ Many of the westward routes settlers and migrants could have taken



■ Chief Big Eagle led his band of Dakota Sioux at the battle



SAND CREEK MASSACRE

An attack on a village helped spark the Colorado War

29 NOVEMBER 1864

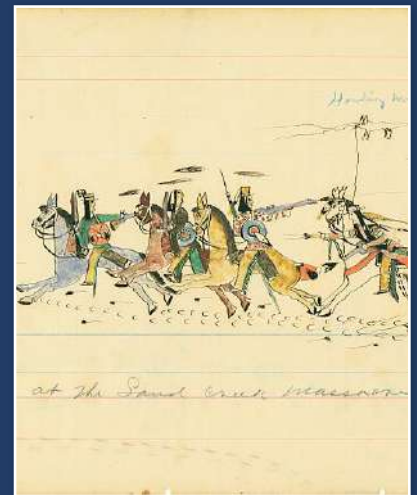
VICTORY: US ARMY

Tensions ran high in Colorado, where the Cheyenne and Arapaho had once freely roamed. After an 1861 treaty, they found themselves with less than one-tenth of the land they had once lived on. To defend themselves against white settlers and troops, the tribes had been actively hostile, attacking any and all US interests.

In 1864, the US government suggested a peace talk and over 750 people made their way there. However, after they had set up camp, they were told to move somewhere else. The Native Americans refused and many of the fighting-age men went out hunting. As a precaution, Chief Black Kettle had flown a US flag and a white flag underneath it from his own cabin to signify that he was friendly and prevent an attack.

However, John Chivington, a US army colonel, had been drinking heavily the night before and was known for his vehement hatred of all Native Americans. He and his men attacked the village, slaughtering hundreds – mostly women, children and the elderly. The Cheyenne had raised a white flag as soon as the attack began but it was ignored. Chivington, nor any of the perpetrators, were ever brought to justice, despite the fact that many white Americans were horrified at his actions.

The massacre had a profound effect on the remaining Cheyenne community. One woman who had survived the massacre, Mochi, became a warrior soon afterwards. Other survivors carried out successful retaliation attacks on forts and white settlers throughout the area.



■ Sand Creek Massacre as depicted by Cheyenne eyewitness and artist Howling Wolf



PLATTE BRIDGE

When tribes united it brought success – but it didn't last long

26 JULY 1865

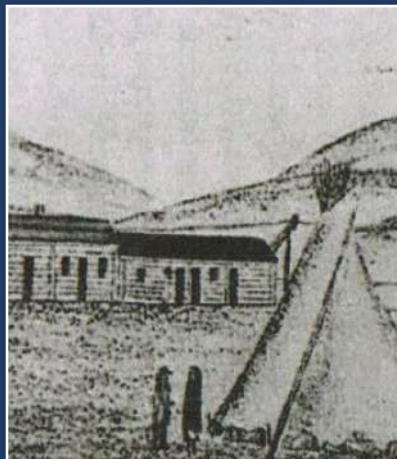
VICTORY: NATIVE AMERICANS

One of the retaliation attacks for the Sand Creek Massacre took place at Platte Bridge, which crossed the North Platte River – a key crossing point for settlers and migrants headed out west. Though the Native Americans had struggled to remain a unified force, the massacre gave them a shared tragedy that motivated them. They decided to attack the Platte River Bridge, quickly disciplining their men into a coordinated force.

On 26 July 1865, the assault began. There were just over 100 US army troops stationed at the bridge but the Native Americans were in their thousands. They hid themselves in strategic points and surrounded the US army troops, many of whom had gone out of the station to protect a wagon train. The Native Americans had also cut off telegraph lines, which meant reinforcements would have been able to come much faster.

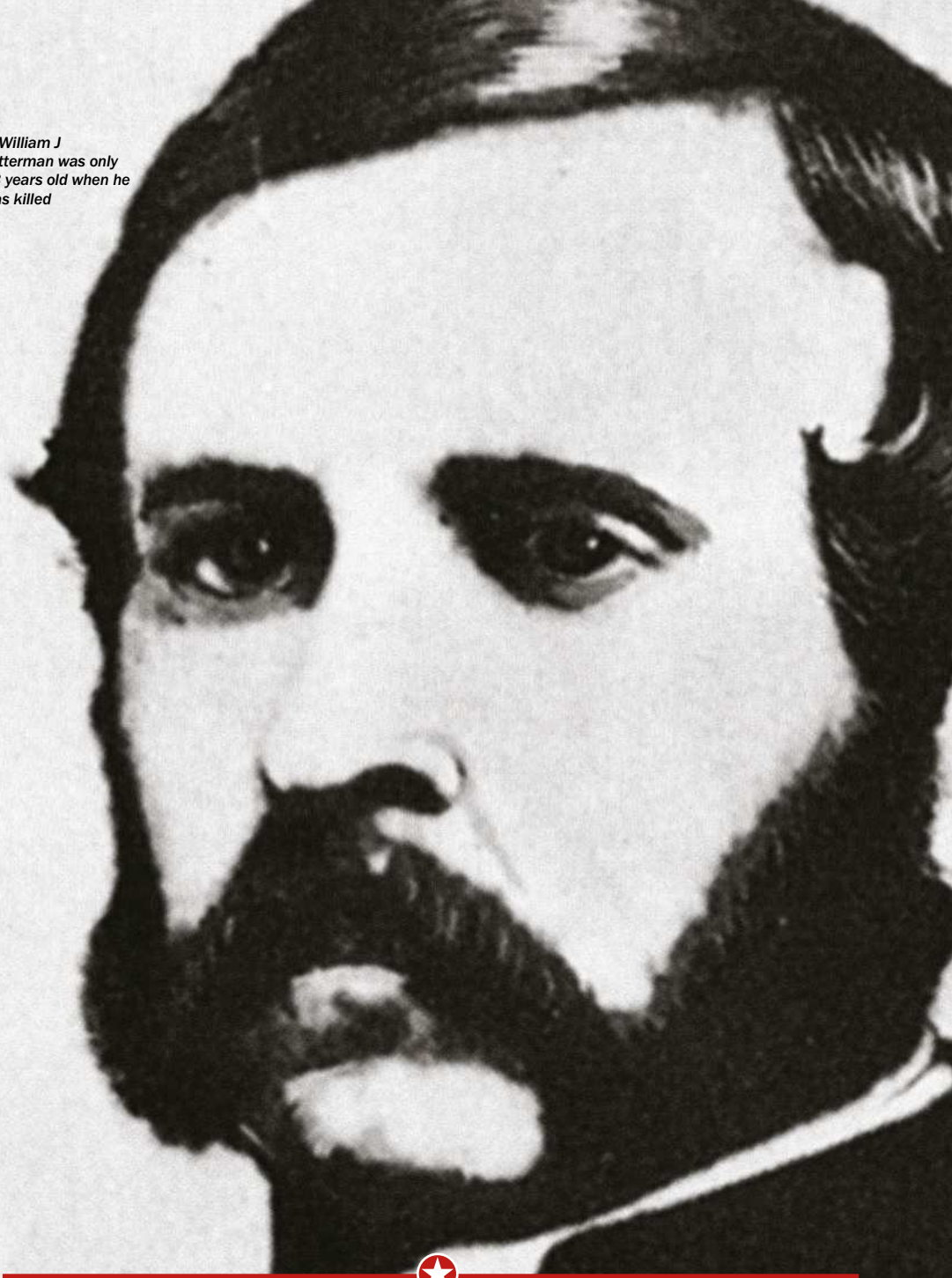
The Native Americans ambushed and quickly overwhelmed the US troops, killing over 20. Some soldiers had managed to escape to the north of the river, which angered the Cheyenne greatly – they accused the Lakota of being cowards. Later that day, the Native Americans got into another skirmish a few miles away from Platte Bridge, where they attacked a wagon train. They killed all but one of its guards.

In spite of their successes, they could not remain unified for long, and most Native Americans went back home to take part in the summer buffalo hunt. This gave them enough time to rest and recuperate, which served them well when the notorious Powder River Expedition reached deep into their territory later that year.



■ The soldiers were based at this station on the Platte River, a key tributary of the Missouri River

■ William J Fetterman was only 33 years old when he was killed



THE FETTERMAN FIGHT

Red Cloud inflicted a stunning defeat on US soldiers

21 DECEMBER 1866, VICTORY: NATIVE AMERICANS

Once gold had been discovered in the Montana hills, it was only a matter of time before settlers would rush through the territory of the Lakota, Cheyenne and Arapaho on their way to get rich quick. This land in Wyoming was prime grazing territory for buffalo, but the Bozeman Trail cut right through the heart of Native American land.

Red Cloud, a Oglala Sioux leader, opposed US road and trail building programmes in the territory, and led a coalition of Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho. He encouraged his followers to attack anyone attempting to build the road.

In what became known as the Fetterman Fight, Red Cloud, Crazy Horse and up to 1,000

others lured a detachment of US troops into a trap near Fort Phil Kearny in December 1866. The US soldiers were led by Captain Fetterman, a young man with little experience.

They lay in wait along the Bozeman Trail. When Fetterman and his 80 troops arrived, the Native Americans taunted them, causing Fetterman to fire his gun and follow the decoy group of Native Americans. The rest of the warriors charged at his detachment.

In close quarters combat, Fetterman and his entire group was killed. Native American attacks like this continued until 1868, when the Treaty of Fort Laramie was signed.



WASHITA RIVER

A disgraced Custer slaughtered a village to restore his reputation

27 NOVEMBER 1868

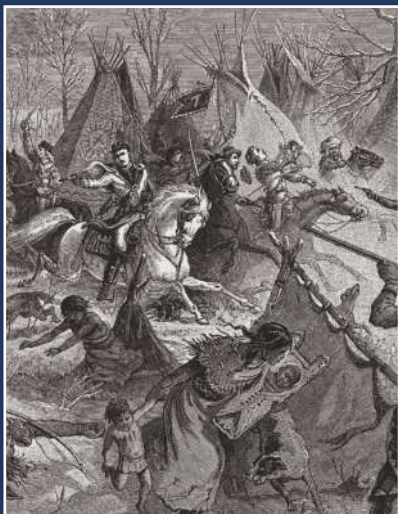
VICTORY: US ARMY

Colonel Custer, who would later achieve notoriety at the Battle of Little Bighorn, was a brash man with more ego than military genius. He had even been convicted of desertion and suspended in 1867, but was reinstated by General Philip Sheridan, who believed Custer to be a good fighter against the Plains tribes.

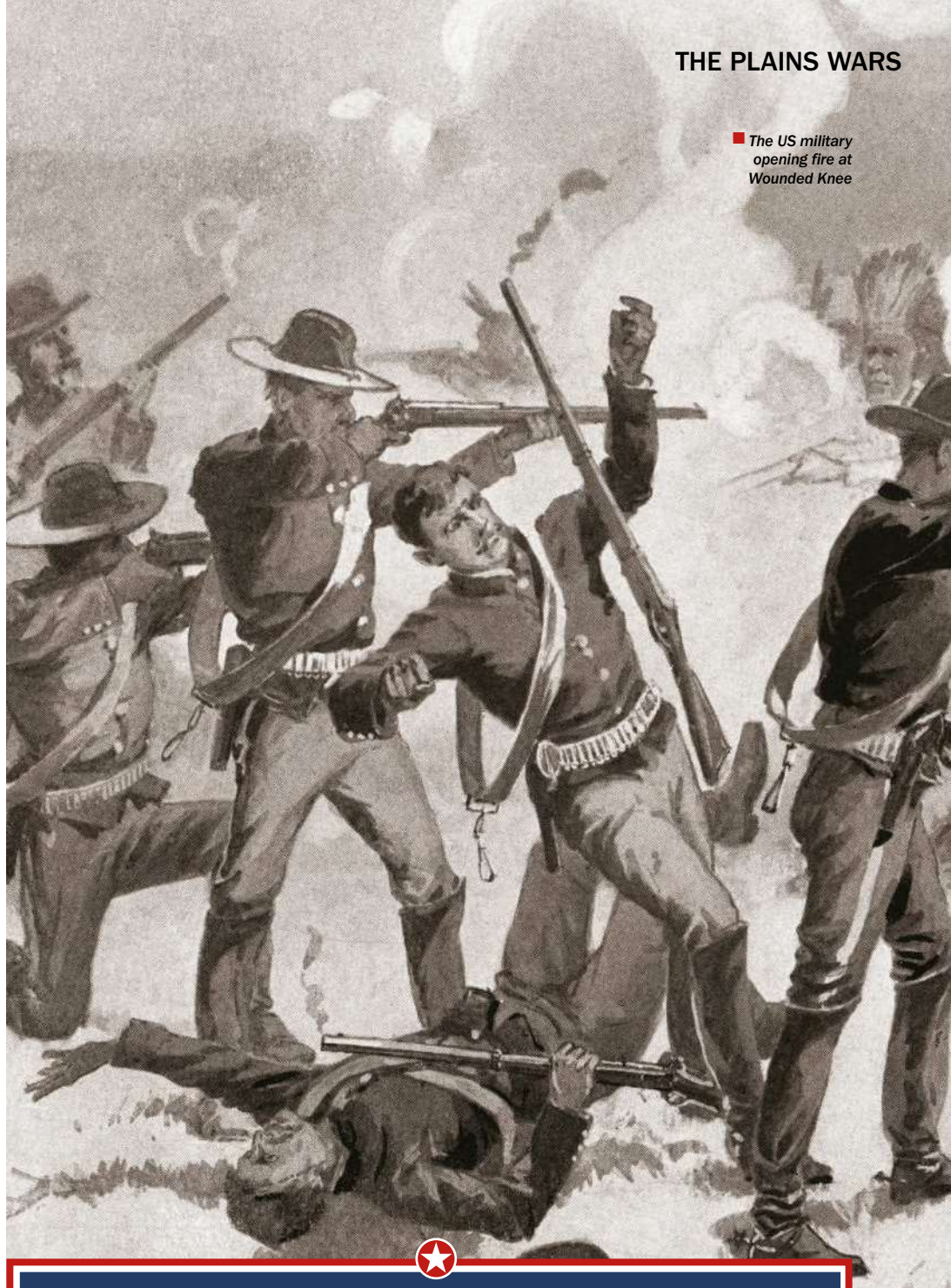
While some tribes, like Black Kettle's, were evidently trying to make peace, this often did not save them from indiscriminate attacks by white army soldiers. Black Kettle had even arranged for protection from the US army in exchange for his peacekeeping efforts, but these would be to no avail. Believing that winter would bring a lull in the Plains Wars, 6,000 Cheyenne, Arapaho and Kiowa had set up their camp for the season on the banks of the Washita river in the south – the site is now marked by a museum in Oklahoma.

On 27 November 1868, Custer ordered his Seventh Cavalry attack on a village led by peaceful Black Kettle. Custer surrounded them at night, and without doing any reconnaissance or information gathering, ordered the attack the next morning. The troops came from all directions, meaning the villagers had nowhere to run. Most of the Native Americans became prisoners, but 100 died and their village was completely destroyed.

Attacks such as this further damaged the Native Americans' morale. Slowly, they were resigned to life on the reservations. In the US, the battle was hailed as one of the first major victories in the entire Plains conflict, and it restored Custer's reputation.



■ Custer rides into the village, guns blazing, at dawn



■ The US military opening fire at Wounded Knee



WOUNDED KNEE

The infamous incident that was a clear massacre

29 DECEMBER 1890, VICTORY: US ARMY

After the Sioux's resolve had largely been broken by decades of war and bloodshed, many had been forced onto the reservations. Looking for anything that could give them hope, some Sioux embraced the 'Ghost Dance' spiritual movement, which promised a restoration of the precolonial era. An important belief was that group dances could hasten the arrival of this brand new world, but the US authorities falsely interpreted this as a war dance. They attempted to arrest Sitting Bull, but he was killed in a skirmish. Some of his Lakota followers headed for safety, but encountered a detachment of their feared enemies, the US Seventh Cavalry.

The cavalry escorted the group to Wounded Knee Creek. While the group camped, the US army surrounded them, placing four large guns on the camp's perimeter. Tensions were running high, and the next morning the army disarmed most of the Sioux. However, one young man refused to surrender his rifle – possibly because he was deaf, and did not understand the order – and in the scuffle, his rifle went off. The army responded by gunning down hundreds of Lakota, who tried to defend themselves, but were no match for the large guns. The Lakota Sioux had been decimated, their morale crushed. The Plains Wars were finally over.



MOUNTED WARRIORS RUSH FORWARD

As Custer and his troopers fight to the last in this fanciful image, mounted Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors gallop towards the fray at Little Bighorn. Although the cavalrymen were significantly outnumbered, this painting offers the impression of literally thousands of Indians descending on a small band of them.



CUSTER'S LAST FIGHT

Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer strikes a dashing, desperate figure at the centre of this dramatic depiction by artist Otto Becker of Custer's last stand. Brandishing a saber, Custer is defiant during his final moments. Historically inaccurate in many ways, this image is perhaps the best-known interpretation of the event.



THE WINDING RIVER

The Little Bighorn River winds in the distance near the Indian encampment as Custer and his Seventh US Cavalry detachment come to grief on a Montana hillside in June 1876. An apparent error in this image is the location of the fight, which actually occurred on the other side of the river.



FIRING HIS COLT

A wounded trooper of the Seventh Cavalry raises his Colt Model 1873 Single Action Army revolver for a point-blank shot at an attacking warrior. In addition to the bow and arrow, war club and lance, the Native American warriors at Little Bighorn were armed with more than 40 different types of firearms.



TAKING A SCALP

Mutilation of the enemy dead was a common practice among Great Plains tribal warriors, who took scalps to achieve honour. While troopers were certainly scalped at Little Bighorn, claims that Custer was scalped or his body otherwise mutilated are unsubstantiated.



BATTLE OF THE LITTLE BIGHORN

WAR CLUB WIELDED

A Native American warrior raises his club to strike a death blow against a fallen trooper of the Seventh Cavalry. The artist also took license in providing the warriors in the painting with some weapons and regalia that probably were not present at the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

CUSTER'S LAST STAND SAW HIM FACE OFF AGAINST THE LAKOTA SIOUX AND THE CHEYENNE IN THE WORST AMERICAN DEFEAT OF THE PLAINS WARS

MONTANA TERRITORY, USA 25-26 JUNE 1876

As the United States expanded westwards, they increasingly clashed with the indigenous people who lived there. Native Americans were usually moved to 'reservations', pockets of remote land miles away from home. If they refused to move to a reservation willingly, they were ruthlessly attacked and purged from their ancestral lands by the American military.

Some believed resistance was futile. For instance, the great Sioux chief Red Cloud agreed to a treaty with the United States in April 1868, consenting to relocate his tribe northwards to a reservation in the Black Hills of the Dakota Territory. On the other hand, some Sioux factions – like the Lakota – refused to move, particularly as white settlers encroached on reservations that had been promised to them and other tribes. Among these were the Cheyenne and Arapaho, who joined leaders such as Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull in defying the treaty.

But the discovery of gold in the Black Hills in 1874 quickened the pace of white settlement in the area. In 1876, the US Army was charged with eliminating the threat to the white families settling there. A unit of cavalry was dispatched to the Montana Territory under the command of Colonel John Gibbon and Generals George Crook and Alfred Terry. They planned to trap the Native Americans and either annihilate them or force them to move.

Terry and Gibbon, hoping to trap their adversaries, headed for the valley of the Little Bighorn River. The Seventh Cavalry Regiment,

under Lieutenant Colonel George A Custer, was detached and ordered to follow Sitting Bull. The lieutenant was offered the firepower of a Gatling gun detachment but he declined, saying the guns would slow him down. He was also offered extra cavalry but rejected this too, stating that his men – made up of less than 700 troopers – were capable of handling the mission on their own.

When a Lakota village was spotted along the banks of the Little Bighorn on 25 June, Custer divided his men into three groups. Fearing that the element of surprise would be lost, he impetuously ordered an immediate assault.

Major Marcus Reno made first contact with the enemy at about 3pm but a Native American force pushed Reno's dismounted troopers to a hillside, where they were pinned down. Shortly after, Custer sent his five companies towards the other end of the village. Crazy Horse completed an envelopment of them and drove them northward.

Captain Frederick Benteen joined Reno and fought off repeated assaults and their survivors retired after another day of fighting. Meanwhile, Custer fought a running battle with his pursuers until his five companies were finally surrounded on high ground a few miles from Reno's position. The lieutenant died and his company was annihilated.

However, although they had prevailed at the Little Bighorn, the Sioux would find themselves overwhelmed. Within a year, the Black Hills would be taken from them and they would be forced to a new place to live.

“THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN THE BLACK HILLS IN 1874 QUICKENED THE PACE OF WHITE SETTLEMENT IN THE AREA. IN 1876, THE US ARMY WAS CHARGED WITH ELIMINATING THE THREAT TO THE WHITE FAMILIES SETTLING THERE”



US 7TH CAVALRY REGIMENT

TROOPS C.700



LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEORGE A CUSTER LEADER

Shown above in 1865, George A Custer was promoted to the temporary rank of brigadier general during the Civil War.

Strengths He was well-known for his bravery and fighting spirit.

Weaknesses Custer was impetuous and took needless risks.



SEVENTH CAVALRY REGIMENT

KEY UNIT

The veteran Seventh Cavalry Regiment followed its commander, George Custer, to destruction at the Little Bighorn.

Strengths The regiment was a mobile and quick-strike force.

Weaknesses They were lightly equipped for sustained combat.



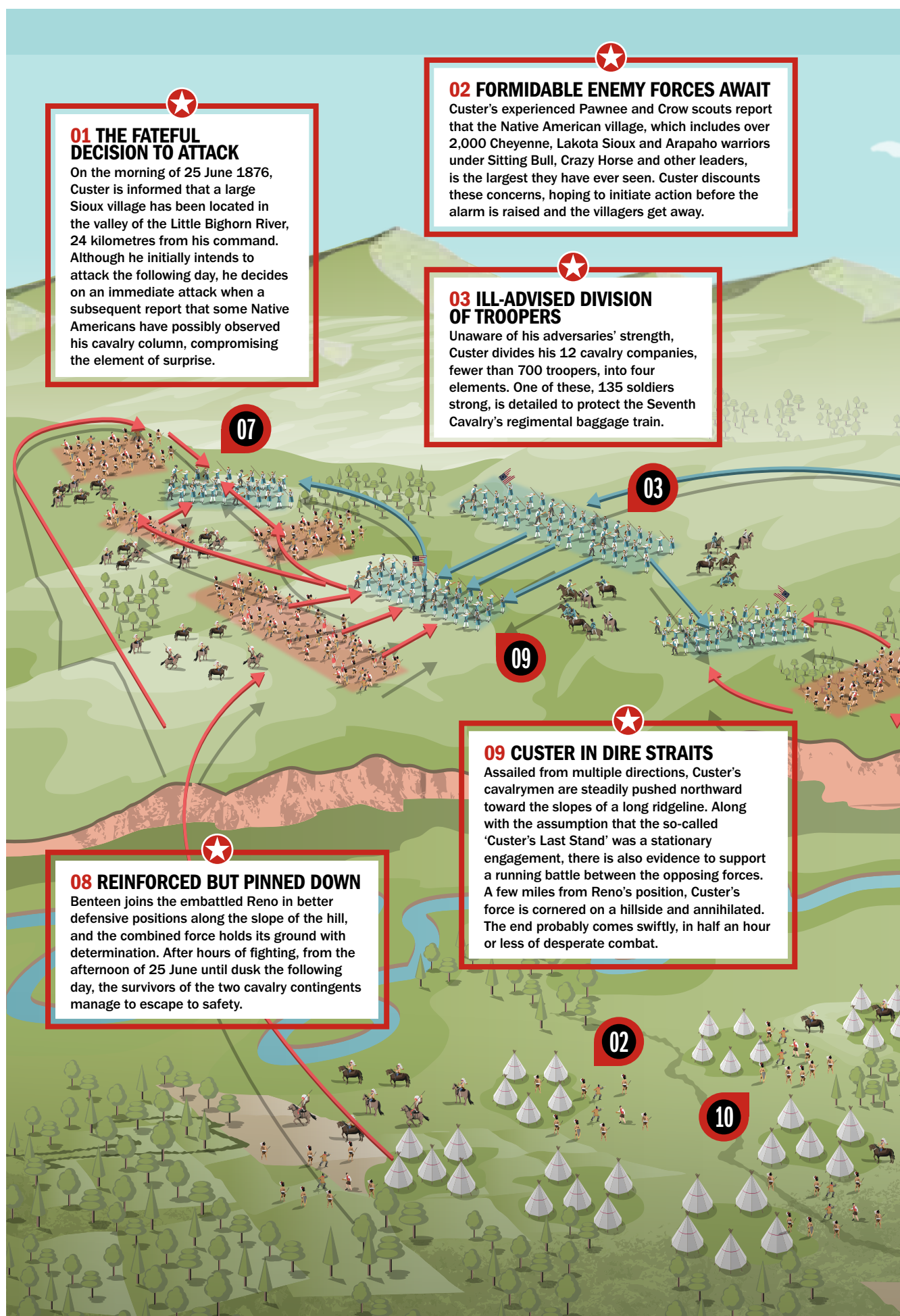
SPRINGFIELD MODEL 1873 CARBINE

KEY WEAPON

A 'trapdoor' rifle, the Model 1873 utilised a hinged breechblock.

Strengths A short carbine that was easy to transport and had excellent range.

Weaknesses It had a low rate of fire due to the single-shot chamber.





LAKOTA SIOUX, CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO

WARRIORS 2,000+



CRAZY HORSE LEADER

Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull and others led a tribal alliance at Little Bighorn. **Strengths** Crazy Horse was visionary, spiritual, courageous and inspirational.

Weaknesses He was willing to engage in a war against the odds.



TRIBAL WARRIORS KEY UNIT

Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors pursued the 7th Cavalry on horseback.

Strengths They were courageous with great endurance.

Weaknesses The warriors were often outgunned and outmanned, though not at the Little Bighorn.

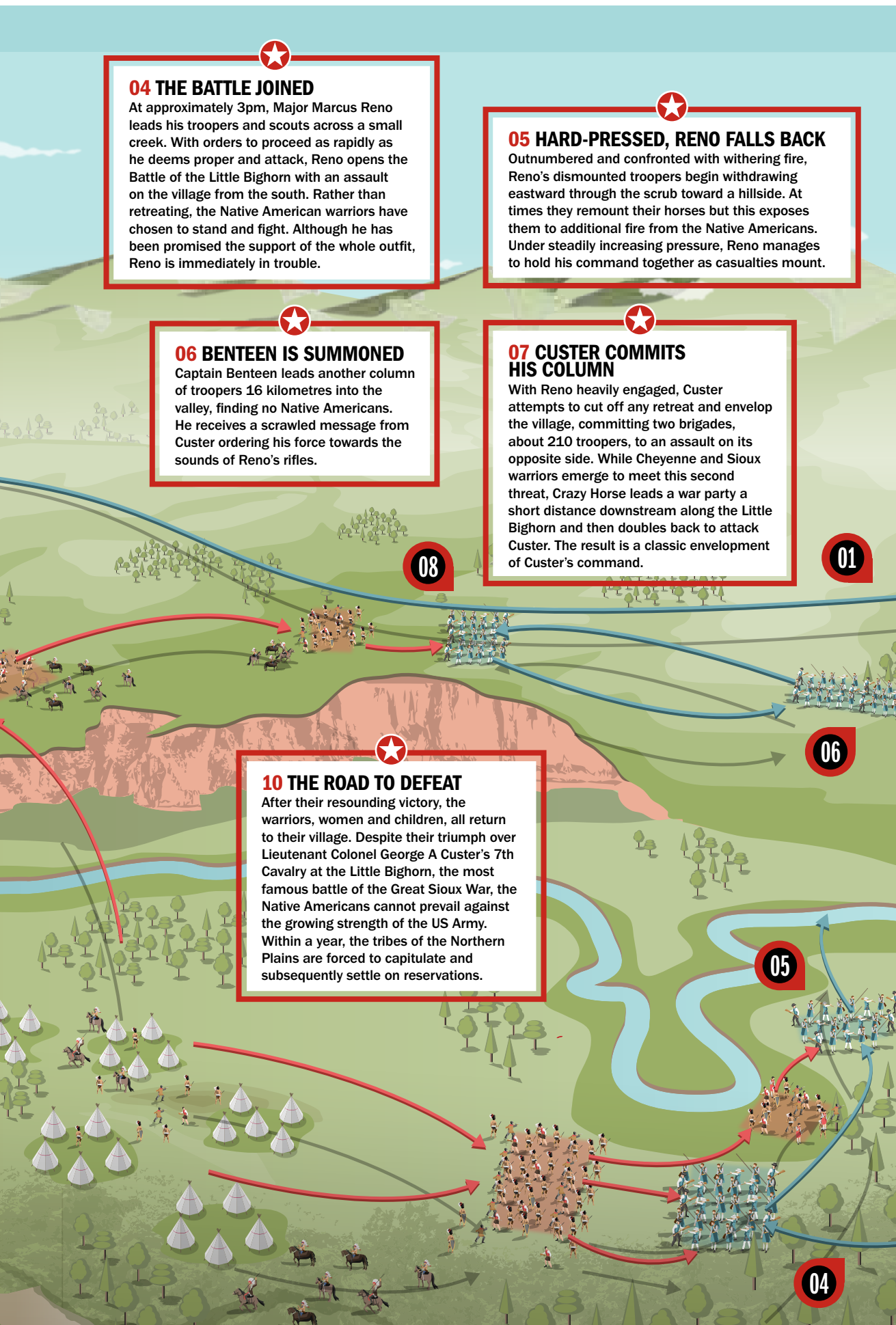


RIFLES KEY WEAPON

Winchester and Henry repeating rifles provided great firepower.

Strengths Rapid rates of fire for repeating rifles.

Weaknesses A shorter range compared to single-shot rifles.



04 THE BATTLE JOINED

At approximately 3pm, Major Marcus Reno leads his troopers and scouts across a small creek. With orders to proceed as rapidly as he deems proper and attack, Reno opens the Battle of the Little Bighorn with an assault on the village from the south. Rather than retreating, the Native American warriors have chosen to stand and fight. Although he has been promised the support of the whole outfit, Reno is immediately in trouble.

05 HARD-PRESSED, RENO FALLS BACK

Outnumbered and confronted with withering fire, Reno's dismounted troopers begin withdrawing eastward through the scrub toward a hillside. At times they remount their horses but this exposes them to additional fire from the Native Americans. Under steadily increasing pressure, Reno manages to hold his command together as casualties mount.

06 BENTEN IS SUMMONED

Captain Benteen leads another column of troopers 16 kilometres into the valley, finding no Native Americans. He receives a scrawled message from Custer ordering his force towards the sounds of Reno's rifles.

07 CUSTER COMMITS HIS COLUMN

With Reno heavily engaged, Custer attempts to cut off any retreat and envelop the village, committing two brigades, about 210 troopers, to an assault on its opposite side. While Cheyenne and Sioux warriors emerge to meet this second threat, Crazy Horse leads a war party a short distance downstream along the Little Bighorn and then doubles back to attack Custer. The result is a classic envelopment of Custer's command.

10 THE ROAD TO DEFEAT

After their resounding victory, the warriors, women and children, all return to their village. Despite their triumph over Lieutenant Colonel George A Custer's 7th Cavalry at the Little Bighorn, the most famous battle of the Great Sioux War, the Native Americans cannot prevail against the growing strength of the US Army. Within a year, the tribes of the Northern Plains are forced to capitulate and subsequently settle on reservations.

BATTLE OF MANILA BAY

THE US NAVY'S ASIATIC SQUADRON ACHIEVED A CRUSHING VICTORY THAT SURPASSED ALL EXPECTATIONS AND LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR GREATER US INVOLVEMENT IN THE REGION

WORDS JAMES PRICE

MANILA, PHILIPPINES 1 MAY 1898

In the 1890s, tensions between the US and Spain were rising as the latter suppressed a nationalist revolt in Cuba, while public sentiment in the US was firmly in favour of Cuban independence. These tensions came to a head on 15 February 1898, when USS Maine inexplicably exploded while at anchor in Havana Harbour, killing all 260 men on board. Inflamed by the 'yellow press', the US quickly pinned the blame on the Spanish.

The US Navy's Asiatic Squadron was ordered to make ready and began to assemble in Hong Kong. The five ships of the squadron, under the command of Commodore George Dewey, were soon bolstered by the protected cruiser USS Baltimore and the cutter USS Hugh McCulloch. Dewey, acutely aware that there were no friendly bases in the region from which to resupply, purchased two British steamers, the Nanshan and the Zafiro, to carry coal and supplies, and gathered other supplies in British-controlled Hong Kong.

Having rapidly prepared supplies and ammunition and expanded his squadron from five to nine ships, Dewey was in a strong

position when British authorities in Hong Kong informed him on 24 April that war had been declared between the US and Spain and that the American squadron could no longer maintain its position in neutral British waters. At a dinner with British counterparts, Dewey later recalled comments British officers made about their American counterparts: "A fine set of fellows, but unhappily we shall never see them again."

However, the negative British sentiment was misplaced. Dewey led a powerful squadron, including the protected (meaning armoured or steel-clad) cruisers Baltimore, Raleigh, Boston and Dewey's flagship Olympia, and the unprotected (wooden) cruiser Concord, gunboat Petrel, cutter McCulloch and the Zafiro and Nanshan. With six fighting ships and ample supplies, it was a potent force.

The Spanish fleet, meanwhile, comprised two unprotected cruisers, the Castilla and Reina Cristina, and five gunboats: Don Juan de Austria, Isla de Cuba, Don Antonio de Ulloa, Marques del Duero and Isla de Luza. All were ageing and with inferior armaments

to the American ships, while Admiral Patricio Montojo y Pasarón, their commander, complained that the Castilla could "merely be considered as a floating battery, incapable of manoeuvring, on account of the bad condition of her hull".

The Spanish preparations had also been a disaster. Having initially planned to position his ships in Subic Bay 50 kilometres from Manila, upon arriving there on 25 April Montojo found that the shore batteries he had ordered were a month behind schedule and that the mines and torpedoes he wished to use were also not ready, so he returned to Manila Bay.

Montojo now faced some unenviable choices, as summarised by historian Kenneth E Hendrickson: flee and make Dewey pursue, although this was opposed by the governor of Manila; head out to sea for battle, which, given his inferior force, would be suicide; or harbour near Manila, either near the Port of Manila or



■ The USS Olympia leads the US Asiatic Squadron against the Spanish near the Bay of Cavite, 1 May 1898

■ The Spanish fleet positioned itself near the arsenal at Cavite in order to be supported by the shore batteries and reducing the risk of civilian casualties



in the nearby Bay of Cavite. Fearing the loss of civilian lives from stray shells if he anchored close to Manila, Montojo opted for Cavite and waited for the American storm.

Dewey's squadron put to sea on 25 April and steamed first to Subic Bay. They found only the same incomplete batteries Montojo had found and so headed on to Manila Bay.

On the morning of 1 May, the squadron headed into Manila Bay at around 4.30am "at a speed of four knots, not wishing to appear at the Bay of Manila too early", according to the correspondent to J L Stickney, who was aboard Olympia. Slipping in under cover of darkness, the six fighting ships of the squadron, led by Olympia, crept forward, amazed that they had not encountered mines. In fact, they only crossed two, which both exploded when the US ships were three kilometres away.

The American squadron was near Cavite as the Sun rose. The Spanish shore batteries opened fire at 5.10am but had little effect. At 5.40am, the American squadron was within 4,500 metres of the Spanish ships, which were positioned in an "irregular crescent". Dewey turned to Captain Gridley and said, "You may fire when you are ready, Gridley."

For the next two hours the two lines exchanged fire, although the gunnery on both sides was inaccurate. The American squadron made five passes along the Spanish line, west to east and then the reverse. The fifth run passed as close as possible, so that "even the six-pounders were effective, and the storm of shells poured upon the unfortunate Spanish", according to Stickney.

Montojo's flagship, the Reina Cristina, and the Don Juan de Austria made, according to Dewey, "brave and desperate attempts to charge the Olympia" but suffered very heavily, and Montojo gave the order to "sink the ship before the magazines should explode" and "with great sorrow" moved from the flagship to one of the gunboats. Meanwhile, the Don Juan de Austria began to sink, and the Castilla had just one gun left before it went up in flames and was abandoned.



■ A depiction of the Reina Cristina. The Spanish ships were outclassed by their modern American counterparts

During the fifth run past, Dewey was informed that Olympia's ammunition was running low and so he signalled the squadron to disengage. The report proved incorrect, but Dewey took the opportunity to let the men have breakfast. The American ships had received several hits but none particularly serious.

The Spanish, however, were badly bloodied and limped into shallow waters in an attempt to keep the larger American ships at a distance. At 11.16am, Dewey ordered in first the Petrel and Baltimore, and then the Petrel (again) and Concord to finish the enemy. The Spanish shore batteries and the Don Antonio de Ulloa were all that was left by this point, and the Ulloa soon sank. The batteries surrendered at 12.15pm.

It was a crushing victory for the Americans: the Spanish lost all seven ships and suffered 371 casualties, while the Americans suffered just nine men wounded. It was a triumph that announced the US as one of the great international powers, while for Spain it was an utter embarrassment. Montojo returned home and was put on trial before being dismissed. Dewey, meanwhile, was promoted to admiral and became a hero in the US.

THE FALL OF THE PHILIPPINES

With the Spanish ships at the bottom of the sea, the Philippines was exposed

Commodore Dewey quickly sent word of his dazzling victory to Washington, DC. He estimated that around 5,000 men would be required to take the Philippines, along with the Philippine revolutionary Emilio Aguinaldo and his rebel forces, with whom Dewey had been in contact. The US government, buoyed by the unprecedented naval success, sent over around 12,000 troops under the command of General Lesley Merritt to secure the Spanish territory.

Relations between the rebels and American forces soon deteriorated. Aguinaldo had originally believed that American assistance would lead to Philippine independence but came to realise that the Americans were unlikely to support this after all.

Under this air of suspicion, Merritt and Dewey contacted Fermín Jáudenes, the governor

of Manila, and effectively arranged for the surrender of the city. Unaware that a ceasefire had been declared hours earlier, on 13 August, after receiving a token bombardment by the Americans, the Spanish withdrew and raised a white flag, in what became known as the 'mock battle of Manila'.

The US now had a presence in the Pacific and, perhaps fearing that a European power would take advantage of any power vacuum, assumed control of the region. Spain officially ceded it to the US on 10 December 1898.

Feeling betrayed, Aguinaldo declared himself president and instigated the Philippine-American War, which would rage for over three years. Nonetheless, the US now had interests in the Pacific region, and it was quickly establishing itself as a global power.



■ US forces fly their national flag over Manila after taking control of the Philippine capital

■ Color Sergeant George Berry of Troop G, Tenth US Cavalry Regiment, carries the national flag of his own command as well as the standard of the Third US Cavalry Regiment in the assault upon the Spanish works on Kettle Hill, San Juan Heights



BATTLE OF SAN JUAN HILL

IN A SPIRITED CLASH WITH ENTRENCHED SPANISH TROOPS, AMERICAN SOLDIERS CAPTURED THE HIGH GROUND SURROUNDING SANTIAGO DE CUBA, GIVING RISE TO A LEGEND

SANTIAGO, CUBA 1 JULY 1898

On the morning of 1 July 1898, American soldiers of the Fifth Army Corps, commanded by Major General William Shafter, surveyed the heights surrounding Santiago de Cuba, Cuba's second largest city. The Americans had come ashore days earlier at Daiquiri and initiated an expedition against the Spanish stronghold, where General Arsenio Linares y Pombo commanded more than 10,000 troops and a naval squadron lay at anchor in the harbour. Linares detailed 500 soldiers to defend the high ground that was collectively known as San Juan Heights, including San Juan Hill and Kettle Hill, outside the city. The defenders dug trenches and fortified a small, blue-washed blockhouse on San Juan Hill.

Shafter commanded approximately 15,000 troops in three divisions, including the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry Regiments, black horsemen of the famed 'Buffalo Soldiers', and the First US Volunteer Cavalry, nicknamed the 'Rough Riders' – a collection of western cowboys

and eastern aristocrats led by Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, the flamboyant former assistant secretary of the navy. Due to logistical difficulties, most of the American cavalrymen had reached Cuba without their mounts and would be forced to fight the coming battle for San Juan Heights as infantrymen.

To protect his right flank, Shafter sent General Henry Lawton and 6,000 troops of the Second Division to seize the village of El Caney. Although Lawton believed that he would be able to accomplish the task swiftly, 500 well-armed Spanish defenders managed to hold El Caney until late afternoon on 1 July, depriving the main thrust at San Juan Heights of reinforcements. Meanwhile, the movement against the heights continued as the fight for El Caney raged. More than 8,000 American troops advanced toward the 3,500-metre-long Spanish line, coming under accurate rifle and artillery fire from above.

After marching through thick jungle for about 30 minutes, troops of the First Division emerged from a wooded area and immediately took casualties. Several officers were wounded, and for a time confusion reigned. The exposed American position was later dubbed 'Hell's Pocket'. Temporarily sheltering from the hail of bullets and shells at the base of San Juan Hill and without specific orders, several lower-ranking officers decided to take action. Lieutenant Jules G Ord sought out his brigade commander, General Hamilton S Hawkins, and blurted, "General, if you will order a charge, I will lead it."

At around 1pm, elements of four regiments rose from their cover and advanced towards the summit of San Juan Hill. As the gradient steepened, the lines frayed. Some soldiers tumbled down with wounds while the others pressed on. At a critical moment, three multi-

barrelled Gatling guns opened on the Spanish lines from a distance of roughly 550 metres. Several enemy soldiers were immediately observed abandoning their trenches. As the Gatling guns sprayed the shocked Spanish, the leading American troops came within 140 metres of the crest. Seconds later, the attackers sprang into a furious charge that routed the defenders. After 50 minutes of intense combat, the Americans had seized their target of San Juan Hill.

Meanwhile, the action at Kettle Hill was furious. The dismounted Tenth Cavalry, with the Rough Riders and Third Cavalry in support, stormed up the slope as Gatling guns chattered away. Although defending fire and oppressive heat slowed their advance – causing units to become mingled and bunched up – the Americans kept pushing forward, reaching the trenches on the crest and engaging the Spanish soldiers in hand-to-hand fighting. The surviving defenders broke and fled towards Santiago, and the Americans began taking fire from San Juan Hill. However, the momentum of their attack soon silenced the guns of the enemy.

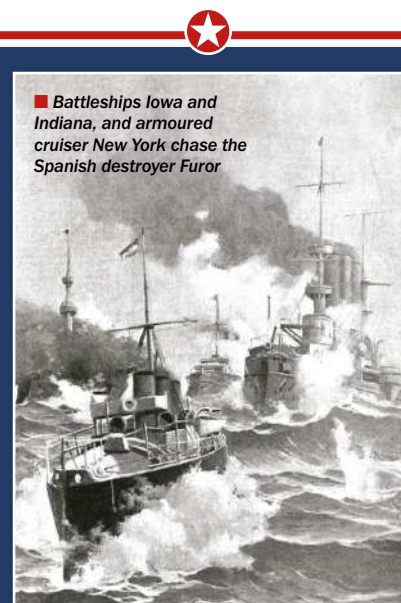
The capture of San Juan Heights sealed the fate of the Spanish defenders at Santiago. All told, American losses amounted to 205 killed and nearly 1,200 wounded. Meanwhile, the Spanish lost 215 dead and 376 wounded. Rather than assaulting another defensive line, Shafter chose to lay siege to the city. Two days later, the Spanish naval squadron sallied from the harbour and was annihilated by a superior US Navy flotilla. On 17 July, Santiago finally surrendered.

The Battle of San Juan Hill was the decisive action of the Spanish-American War in Cuba and made Roosevelt, who displayed great heroism in the battle, a national hero.

“MOST OF THE AMERICAN CAVALRYMEN HAD REACHED CUBA WITHOUT THEIR MOUNTS AND WOULD BE FORCED TO FIGHT THE COMING BATTLE FOR SAN JUAN HEIGHTS AS INFANTRYMEN”



■ American soldiers man a trench on San Juan Hill, with fortifications visible in the distance



■ Battleships Iowa and Indiana, and armored cruiser New York chase the Spanish destroyer Furor

VICTORY AT SANTIAGO

The modern battleships of the US Navy utterly destroyed an outclassed Spanish flotilla in the vicious Battle of Santiago de Cuba

The US Navy's blockade of Santiago de Cuba lasted 37 days and ended violently on 3 July 1898 with the destruction of the Spanish squadron of four armoured cruisers and two destroyers under Admiral Pascual Cervera y Topete. While the heaviest armament the Spanish warships mounted was 28-centimetre guns, the battleships of the US North Atlantic and Flying Squadrons, under the senior command of Admiral William Sampson and Commodore Winfield Schley, mounted 33-centimetre main batteries. The Spanish vessels were plagued with unreliable equipment and weaponry. Poorly trained crews compounded their shortcomings.

Cervera attempted to run the American blockade that fateful morning, but six hours later his command was shattered. The armoured cruisers Infanta Maria Teresa, Vizcaya and Almirante Oquendo, along with destroyers Pluton and Furor, were either sunk or blasted and beached by the firepower of the American battleships USS Indiana, Massachusetts, Iowa, Texas and Oregon, and the armoured cruiser Cristóbal Colón engaged in a running battle with Oregon that lasted over an hour before the damaged Spanish vessel was beached and struck its colours.

The stinging defeat left the Spanish with 323 killed, 151 wounded and 1,720 imprisoned. On the other hand, American losses amounted to only one sailor killed and one wounded.



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Find out what the US military has been up to since the millennium

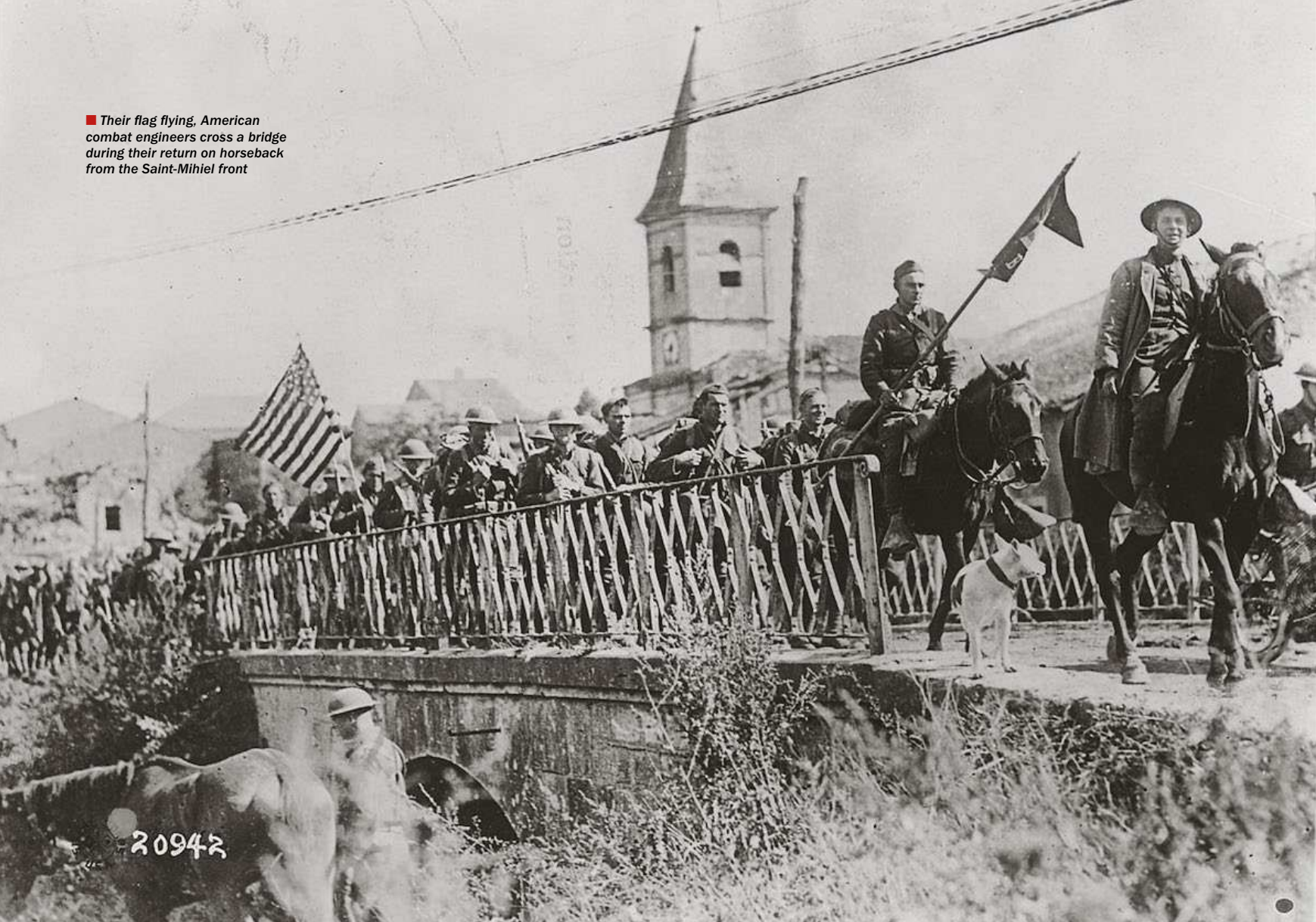
156 WEAPONS OF WAR

Take a look at most iconic weapons used by the US Armed Forces through history





■ Their flag flying, American combat engineers cross a bridge during their return on horseback from the Saint-Mihiel front



BATTLE OF SAINT-MIHIEL

SUPPORTED BY FRENCH TROOPS, THE US ARMY CONDUCTED ITS FIRST INDEPENDENT OFFENSIVE AGAINST A GERMAN SALIENT DURING WORLD WAR I

WORDS MIKE HASKEW

SAINT-MIHIEL, FRANCE 12-15 SEPTEMBER 1918

When the United States entered World War I in April 1917, its armed forces were woefully unprepared to assume an immediately active role in the fight against the Central Powers. Then, as American soldiers began arriving in Western Europe, senior French and British commanders sought to utilise these fresh troops to augment the ranks of their own depleted formations.

General John J 'Black Jack' Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Force, would have none of it. The US Army would operate as an intact force as much as possible, although at times Pershing understood that US troops would necessarily be under the tactical command of Allied officers. The Americans participated in a major battle for the first time at Cantigny in May 1918, and their numbers continued to grow throughout the summer.

By late August, Pershing had persuaded French Marshal Ferdinand Foch, supreme Allied commander, to allow a limited US offensive against the troublesome Saint-Mihiel salient, a bulge in the Allied line the Germans had occupied since late 1914 during an attempt to seize the fortifications at Verdun in northwest France. Nevertheless, German possession of the salient impeded Allied rail traffic and communications from Paris and between Verdun and the neighbouring city of Nancy.



■ American infantrymen move forward as tanks lead the way during the opening hours of the fight at the Saint-Mihiel salient

During more than three years of occupation, the Germans had bolstered defences in the salient with interlocking trenches, machine gun nests, and artillery emplacements. Pershing expected a tough fight and deployed over 260,000 American and French colonial soldiers to reduce the stronghold. On the left, or northwestern shoulder, he placed the US 26th Division of V Corps. On the right were the US First, 42nd, and 89th Divisions of IV Corps, and the Second, Fifth, 82nd, and 90th Divisions of I Corps. The Third and 78th Divisions were held in reserve. The French II Colonial Corps was positioned at the apex of the salient.

The plan called for the French to fix the eight frontline and two reserve divisions of German Detachment C in place within the salient while the US divisions attacked both flanks, forcing the enemy to flee or potentially enveloping the defenders within an ever-shrinking pocket. Hopefully, the victorious Americans would press on to capture the fortress city of Metz, a German command centre.

The American offensive commenced on 12 September 1918, with a four-hour artillery bombardment by nearly 3,000 field guns. "We then started on our hike to the Saint-Mihiel front arriving on the crest of a hill about 1am," remembered Corporal Eugene Kennedy of the 78th Division. "I saw a sight which I shall never forget. It was the zero hour. In one instant the entire front as far as the eye could reach in either direction was a sheet of flame while the heavy artillery made the earth quake..."

The advance was hampered by several consecutive days of rain that turned dirt roads into quagmires that sank vehicles to their wheel wells and men to their knees. Tanks of the US 344th and 345th Tank Battalions led the way with infantry following closely across the enemy trenches. Allied aircraft maintained control of the skies above the salient.

The innovative combined arms effort was well coordinated and bolstered by Pershing's succinct orders for the operation. The advance was swift, and all objectives for the first day were achieved well ahead of the established timetable. In 30 hours the Allies had captured



■ Marshal Foch congratulating General John Pershing after the Battle of Saint-Mihiel

more than 13,000 prisoners and 460 German artillery pieces.

The success of the offensive was enhanced by a preplanned German withdrawal from the salient that was underway when the Americans struck. German commanders were aware that an attack was coming and chose to shorten their lines, abandoning Saint-Mihiel for better defensive positions.

Both the timing of the offensive and the four-to-one numerical superiority of the Allied troops contributed to the rapid success of the offensive. By 16 September, the Saint-Mihiel salient was effectively cleared of Germans. The thrust toward Metz was called off as Pershing fulfilled a promise to Joffre to extricate his command from their current operation to participate in a much larger offensive on the Meuse-Argonne front to the south.

The American offensive at Saint-Mihiel succeeded not only in achieving its limited objective of clearing the salient, but also in proving the command capabilities of the American establishment from the highest echelon to the tactical level.

"I SAW A SIGHT WHICH I SHALL NEVER FORGET. IT WAS THE ZERO HOUR. IN ONE INSTANT THE ENTIRE FRONT AS FAR AS THE EYE COULD REACH IN EITHER DIRECTION WAS A SHEET OF FLAME WHILE THE HEAVY ARTILLERY MADE THE EARTH QUAKE"

THE YOUNG TANK COMMANDER

Future general George S Patton Jr heroically led the American tanks into battle at Saint-Mihiel

Although the US Army lagged behind its European counterparts in tank development, a small group of young officers embraced the concept of armoured warfare. Among them was Lieutenant Colonel George S Patton Jr. The Americans procured nearly 150 French Renault tanks, and Patton began training two battalions, the 344th and 345th, at Langres, France. While most field commanders chose to control operations from the rear, Patton and other young American officers led from the front, taking advantage of opportunities and dealing with developing threats.

When Patton's tanks went into action at Saint-Mihiel, they led the advance, easily traversing difficult terrain and firing on any and all German positions that offered resistance. To their great advantage, the tanks were subjected only to limited German artillery fire; most enemy guns were already being withdrawn.

Patton was in the midst of the fight, directing his tanks towards trouble spots and exploiting weaknesses. He was wounded during the action and taken to an aid station. For his heroism on 12 September 1918, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

A quarter of a century later, General George Patton, still a foremost proponent of armoured warfare, returned to France as commander of the US Third Army in World War II. Remembering lessons learned at Saint-Mihiel, he became a legend.



■ Patton stands with a French Renault tank while serving in World War I

THE MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE

THE LARGEST AND COSTLIEST OPERATION OF THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN WORLD WAR I CONTRIBUTED TO THE FINAL ALLIED VICTORY

WORDS MIKE HASKEW

MONTFAUCON, FRANCE 26 SEPTEMBER – 11 NOVEMBER 1918

The autumn of 1918 was the decisive moment on the Western Front during World War I, and the presence of 1.2 million American soldiers helped place the Allies in a position that would result in victory over Imperial Germany after four years of agonising stalemate.

While American Expeditionary Force (AEF) and First Army commander General John J 'Black Jack' Pershing and overall Allied military leader French Marshal Ferdinand Foch were often at odds, Foch had acquiesced in early September, allowing the Americans to operate as an autonomous army in striking successfully at the Saint-Mihiel salient. In return, Pershing promised the AEF would pull out of the Saint-Mihiel effort and reposition themselves to participate in a "grand offensive" north of the French village of Verdun.

Delivering on that promise required Colonel George C Marshall, a brilliant staff officer, to coordinate the movement of 400,000 troops to a new start line in less than two weeks. Marshall was equal to the task and went on to lead American forces in World War II as army chief of staff and later to serve as the American secretary of state.

The AEF role in this portion of the grand offensive required a drive in the Argonne Forest, a rugged region bounded by thick growth of trees and brush on one side and the meandering River Meuse on the other. In between, the terrain was inhospitable with ridgelines, small streams, embankments and defiles that German troops had taken great pains to fortify with artillery, machine gun nests and barbed wire. Further, unlike their experience at Saint-Mihiel, the Americans

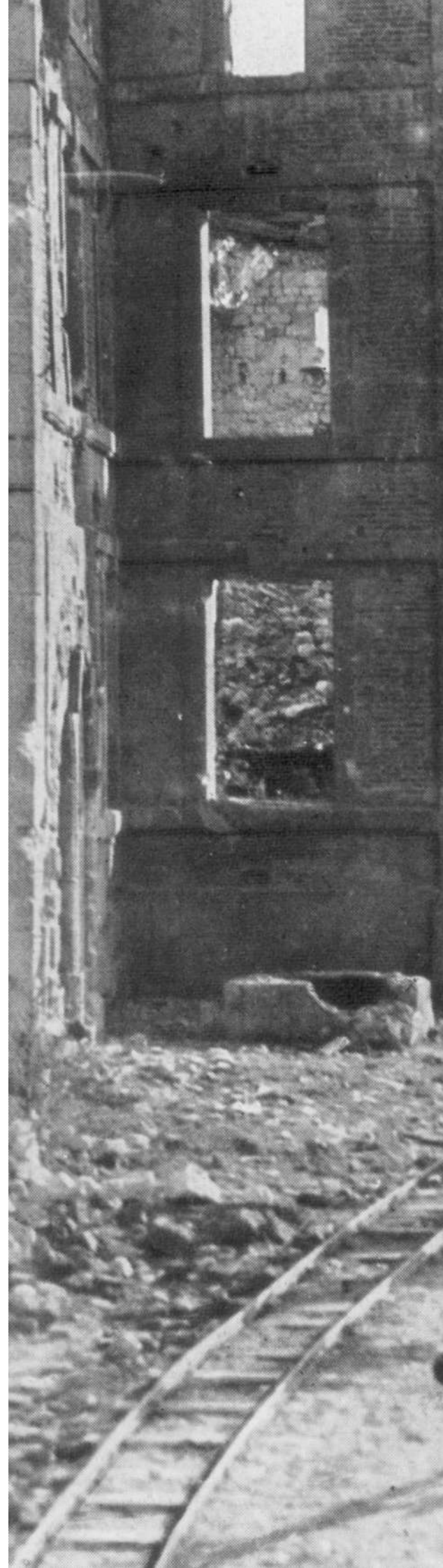
would not be facing Germans in retreat. These soldiers intended to stand their ground and defend the vital rail centre at Sedan, through which virtually all supplies and reinforcements for Kaiser Wilhelm II's armies in France and Belgian Flanders travelled.

At 11.30pm on 25 September, more than 2,700 Allied guns thundered in a preparatory barrage. When the artillery paused, 260,000 American troops in five divisions stepped towards three defensive lines the Germans had nicknamed Giselher, Kreimhilde and Freya. Before the battle was over 47 days later, the Americans would sustain 26,277 killed and 95,786 wounded among more than 1 million troops in the field. The Meuse-Argonne Offensive was by far the largest and bloodiest engagement of the AEF in World War I. French forces lost approximately 70,000 men, and German casualties were near 130,000.

Supported by tanks, the US infantry surged forward at 5.30am on the 26th. The terrain was ill-suited for armoured vehicles and soon the tanks were taking serious losses. Still, initial progress was encouraging until elements of the 79th Division encountered the 500-foot height of Montfaucon, a German observation post and strongpoint that had to be reduced. While other objectives had been achieved by midday, the 79th was stopped cold, and daylight was fading before a single regiment, the 313th, was able to mount a direct attack. Montfaucon finally fell at noon the following day, but by then the US attack had lost momentum. The hope of a quick victory such as at Saint-Mihiel faded away.

The timetable for the Meuse-Argonne Offensive was upset during the first 36 hours,

"WHEN THE ARTILLERY PAUSED, 260,000 AMERICAN TROOPS IN FIVE DIVISIONS STEPPED TOWARD THREE DEFENSIVE LINES THE GERMANS HAD NICKNAMED GISELHER, KREIMHILDE AND FREYA"



■ Advancing American soldiers pass through the ruins of the French town of Varennes during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.

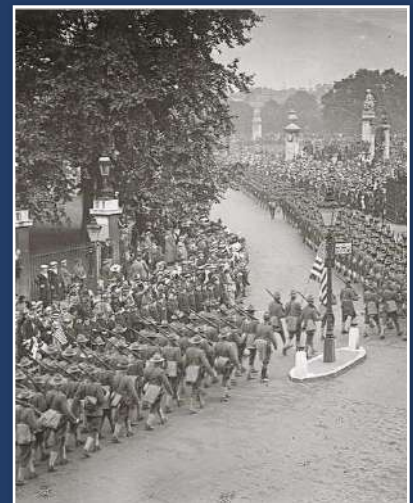
THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

Get to know the vital military forces that brought the weight of American combat troops and resources to the Allies during World War I

When the United States joined the Allied cause in World War I in April 1917, the pledge to send troops and materiel to the Western Front was a daunting task to fulfil. America was unprepared for conflict, and many soldiers had to be drafted, uniformed, equipped, trained and transported to Europe. Approximately 2 million men became part of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) that tipped the outcome of the conflict in favour of the Allies.

The AEF was established on 5 July 1917 under the command of General John J 'Black Jack' Pershing. President Woodrow Wilson intended to place General Frederick Funston in command, but Funston died before he could assume the post. AEF troops began arriving in France in large numbers in January 1918. The first units deployed under British and French officers; however, Pershing insisted on greater command autonomy later, as substantial numbers arrived.

The AEF first fought under American command at Cantigny in May and won. US Army and Marine units went on to fight with distinction at Chateau Thierry, Belleau Wood, the Second Battle of the Marne, Saint-Mihiel, the Meuse-Argonne Offensive and elsewhere. AEF casualties during the Great War totalled 320,000, including about 116,000 killed in action or lost to other causes and 204,000 wounded.



■ Troops of the American Expeditionary Force march through London prior to boarding ships bound for France during World War I

US MILITARY'S GREATEST BATTLES

and American casualties began to mount. Many of the US troops had never experienced combat, and the veterans of Saint-Mihiel were initially resting in reserve.

Soldiers forgot their training under German fire, charging machine-gun positions in masses that were mowed down rather than executing proper fire-and-manoeuvre tactics. Commanders were ineffective. The 35th Division nearly disintegrated under a German counterattack, and only the artillery stemmed the enemy tide. Among the gunners firing on 29 September was future US President Captain Harry S Truman of Battery D, 129th Regiment.

The offensive was stymied. Traffic jams in rear areas made inviting targets for German guns and slowed troop movements. Pershing ordered the veteran First, Third and 32nd Divisions into action, relieving some of the previously untried troops, and he summarily sacked some commanders.

Fighting in the thick of the Argonne Forest on 3 October, more than 500 men of the 77th Infantry Division lost contact with other units and became surrounded by German forces. Fighting for their lives, the men of the 'Lost Battalion' refused to surrender. Finally, when their plight was recognised, the 82nd Division mounted a vigorous flank attack, re-establishing contact. The survivors stumbled away from their five-day ordeal, leaving 197 dead and another 150 wounded or captured.

Amid growing pressure from Foch to produce results, Pershing launched a renewed First Army assault on 4 October. The going remained rough. In six days of ferocious combat, the First Division lost nearly 9,400 killed and wounded while gaining a seven-kilometre wedge up the valley of the River Aire.

Continuing operations included attacks east of the River Meuse intended to silence German artillery that had wreaked havoc on American troops. The US 29th and 33rd Divisions supported by the French 18th Division made some progress but paid in blood. The 29th captured the Bois d'Ormont, but the Germans retaliated with more artillery bombardment, including deadly mustard gas, forcing the Americans to retire. By mid-October, the 29th Division alone had lost more than 5,500 men. Although the German guns were pushed back, they continued to harass Allied movements.

The new offensive was bogged down and Pershing assessed the situation with growing concern. He shook off a bout of depression and rallied with a new plan, handing control of the First Army to General Hunter Liggett, who had previously led I Corps. He also formed the divisions east of the Meuse into the Second Army under General Robert L Bullard, who had led III Corps. He fired General George Cameron of V Corps and promoted hard-charging General Charles Summerall to take his place.

On 13 October, another American attack rolled forward, making limited gains with the capture of the villages of Romagne and Cunel in the central Argonne Forest after a week of fighting. Brigadier General Douglas MacArthur, a brigade commander in the 42nd Infantry Division, led his troops in an assault on the

Cote de Chatillon. By the evening of the 16th, they held the heights and had beaten back German counterattacks. MacArthur, wounded during a gas attack, later received his sixth Silver Star for heroism during the engagement.

Also on the 16th, Grandpre in the northwest Argonne was reached, but the tough enemy did not retire until the 23rd. The 32nd Division captured the Cote Dame Marie, but progress had been terribly slow; these heights had been targeted for capture on the first day of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, three weeks earlier. Overall American casualties at this stage of the offensive topped 100,000.

While First Army paused to regroup, the French 4th Army pulled up alongside, following the successes of the American Second and 36th Divisions that captured Blanc Mont Ridge and pushed the enemy to the banks of the River Aisne on 27 October. By the 31st, the American forces east of the Meuse had taken Consenvoye Heights. Perhaps weeks of attrition were finally weakening the German resolve and defensive capability.

General Liggett pressed the newfound advantage, launching a decisive series of attacks on 1 November. He had hoped the Germans would transfer the bulk of their reinforcements from the centre to the left of their line to defend against the next round of assaults. Liggett did send troops against both

"THE 29TH CAPTURED THE BOIS D'ORMONT, BUT THE GERMANS RETALIATED WITH MORE ARTILLERY BOMBARDMENT, INCLUDING DEADLY MUSTARD GAS"

■ American combat engineers clear away German barbed wire from a section of the Argonne Forest where they intend to build a road



German flanks but assigned three divisions of Summerall's V Corps to charge right up the enemy gut.

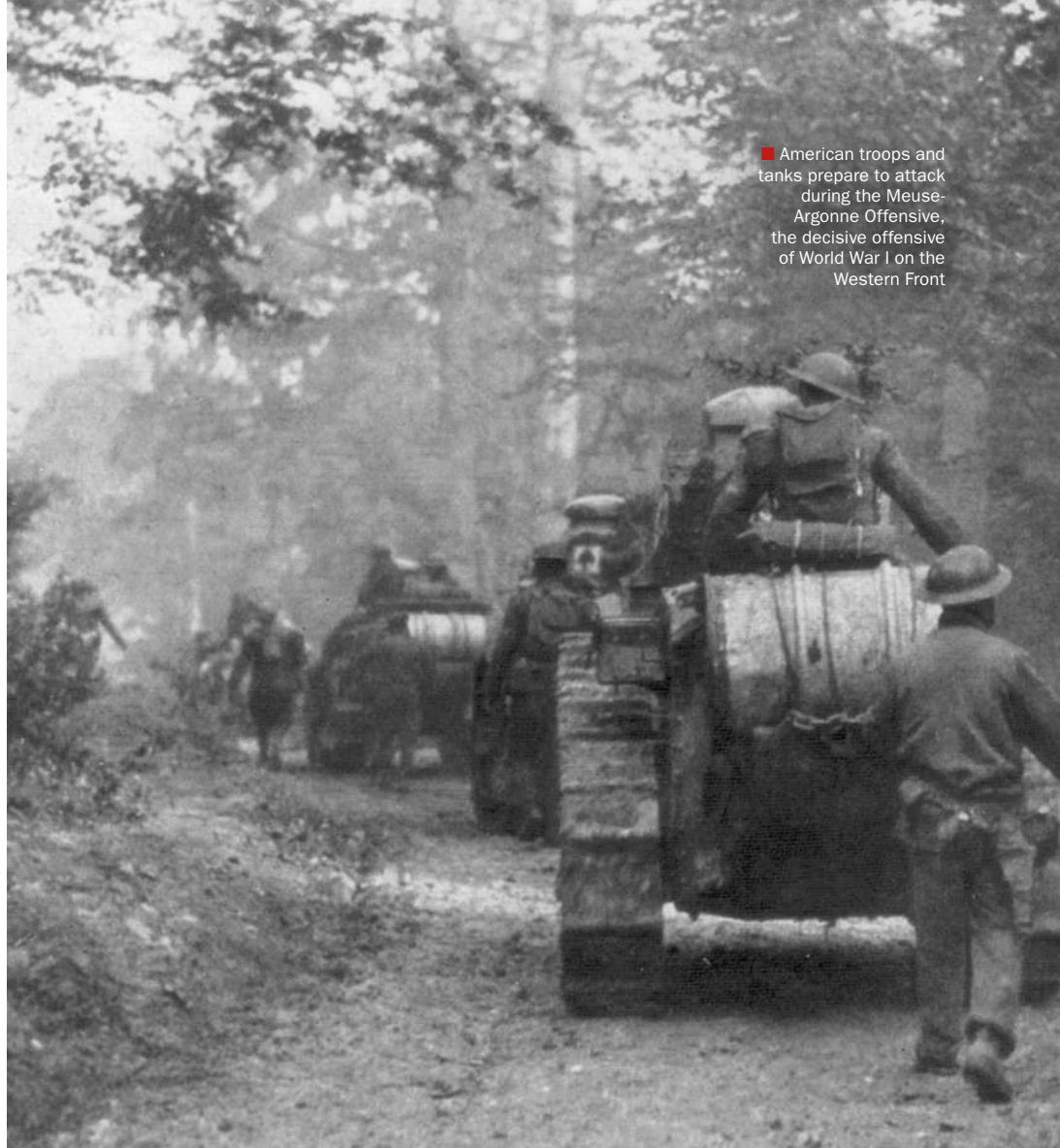
The Germans were startled by the thrust in their centre, led by the veteran Second Infantry Division and a brigade of attached US Marines. The V Corps advanced 9.5 kilometres on the first day, and American spearheads pushed forward another eight kilometres the next. The Germans were compelled to withdraw. Each time they attempted to reestablish a defensive line the swift Allied advance would overrun the positions. On 3 November, the Fifth Infantry Division led III Corps across the Meuse, fighting to establish a bridgehead.

During the first week of November, both Pershing and Liggett realised that Sedan, the key to the offensive, was within American grasp. First Army units actually reached the high ground around the rail centre and prepared to mount the final assault. Then, diplomacy intervened. The Americans were told to stand fast. The French Fourth Army was coming up rapidly, and it would be allowed the honour of capturing Sedan in symbolic retribution for their country's defeat in a major battle that had decided the outcome of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71.

American units east of the Meuse continued to advance as Pershing wanted to capture as many Germans and claim as much territory as possible. When word of the Armistice reached the field on 11 November 1918, US troops were still engaged. They fought and died until the moment the cease-fire went into effect.

The long, costly affair of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive had brought experience to US soldiers and their commanders while hastening the end of the Great War.

■ American troops and tanks prepare to attack during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the decisive offensive of World War I on the Western Front



■ US Marines advance warily through a section of the Argonne Forest that bears the scars of prior combat



■ Soldiers of the US 23rd Infantry Regiment service a 37mm gun while under fire in the Argonne Forest

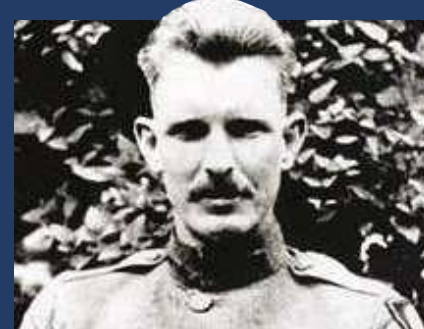
THE MAGNIFICENT SERGEANT YORK

Alvin C York became one of the most decorated soldiers in American history and an enduring hero during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive

When the 82nd Infantry Division went into action in the Argonne Forest on 8 October 1918, a detachment of 17 soldiers was tasked with silencing German machine guns that had ravaged earlier troop movements. One of the soldiers assigned was Private Alvin C York of Company G, 328th Infantry Regiment. York, a former conscientious objector, was a farm boy from Pall Mall, Tennessee, where he had learned to skilfully handle a rifle.

When the Americans advanced, German fire quickly killed at least six of them. York took charge and engaged the enemy. The Americans captured several prisoners and while his comrades guarded them, York became a one-man army. On his own, he attacked the machine gun nest and shot several enemy soldiers. Then, six Germans charged him with fixed bayonets. His rifle was empty, so York dispatched each one with his Colt .45-calibre pistol. The German commander emptied his own pistol at York without success and then offered, in English, to surrender.

When the shooting was over, York was credited with killing 25 Germans and capturing an astounding 132. He received the Medal of Honor and promotion to sergeant. His exploits were portrayed in the 1941 film *Sergeant York*, starring Gary Cooper. Alvin York died at the age of 76 in 1964.



■ Sergeant Alvin C York, hero of the American Expeditionary Force in World War I, wears a clutch of medals on his chest

BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

DISCOVER THE KEY ROLE PLAYED BY THE USA IN THE LONGEST CAMPAIGN OF WORLD WAR II

WORDS SCOTT REEVES

THE BATTLE BEGINS

3 SEPTEMBER 1939

Just hours after Neville Chamberlain told the British people they were at war with Germany, the first shots of the conflict were fired. Those on board the passenger liner SS Athenia were unaware it was being tracked by the German submarine U-30. Two torpedoes were fired when the liner was 322 kilometres off the north west coast of Ireland, causing it to sink in 14 hours with the loss of 117 lives, including 28 Americans.

The targeting of the Athenia indicated Germany was adopting a policy of unrestricted submarine warfare. According to the accepted rules of war, the U-boat commander should have searched the liner and only captured or sunk it if it was engaged in military activity or refused to stop. The Battle of the Atlantic had begun in a particularly cruel manner.

■ One of the 1,301 survivors of the Athenia sinking returns to Galway Harbour

■ A U-boat shells an unknown merchant vessel in the Atlantic – action like this served to increase hostility to the Nazis in America

THE BATTLE IS NAMED

30 SEPTEMBER 1940

In Missouri's *St Joseph News-Press*, journalist Ernest Lindley became one of the first to refer to "the Battle of the Atlantic".

OCCUPATION OF GREENLAND

9 APRIL 1941

President Roosevelt created the protectorate of Greenland to ensure that the US neutrality zone in the western Atlantic remained intact.

MERCHANT SHIPS TARGETED

21 MAY 1941

SS Robin Moor, an American merchant ship, was carrying general cargo when it was stopped by the German submarine U-69 1,207 kilometres west of Sierra Leone. Despite flying a neutral flag, the 46 crew and passengers were given 30 minutes to board the lifeboats. Once they were safely in the water, the submarine fired a torpedo at Robin Moor's rudder and shelled the bridge. The lifeboats were abandoned by the submarine with only four loaves of bread and two tins of butter to sustain them until their rescue, days later.

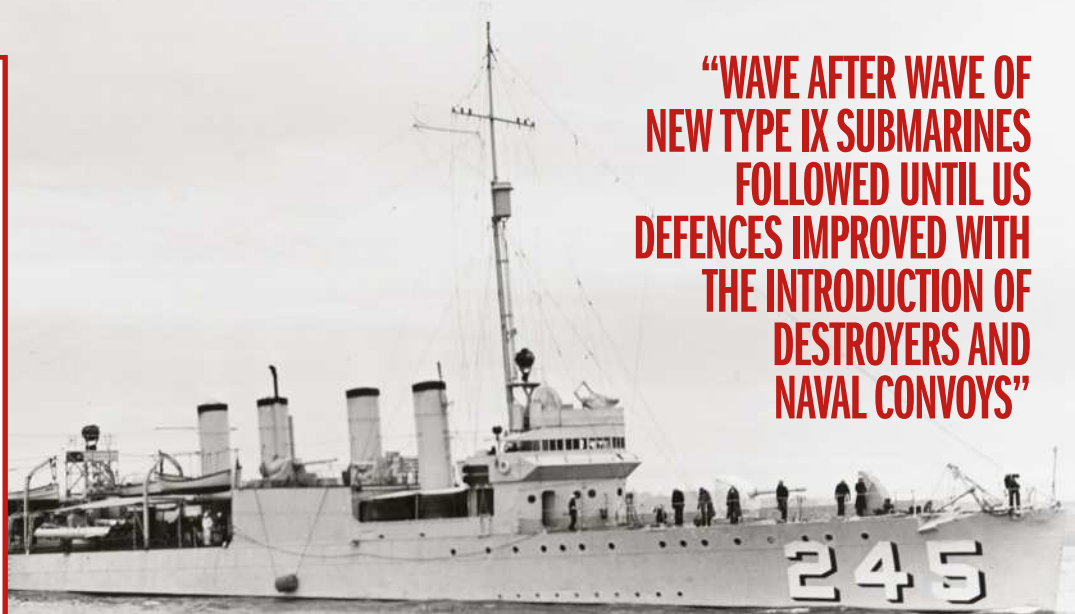
American merchantmen now feared an unprovoked raid from beneath the waves. Hitler feared that the actions of his U-boat commander might provoke the US into war and ordered similar attacks to cease, but it was too late to prevent the growth of anti-German feeling in the USA.

THE SINKING OF USS REUBEN JAMES

31 OCTOBER 1941

President Roosevelt had tried to ensure US neutrality through the creation of the Pan-American Security Zone, a region of the western Atlantic in which acts of war would not be tolerated. To enforce the zone, the US military conducted sea and air patrols. Stretching the definition of 'neutral' to the limit, from 1941 US Navy ships escorted Allied convoys across the Security Zone to ensure no belligerent acts took place in it.

On Halloween 1941, US destroyer Reuben James was on convoy escort duty when it was struck by a torpedo fired by U-552. An explosion in the forward magazine ripped apart the bow and the ship sank immediately with the loss of 115 of the 160-man crew. The sinking of the first US Navy ship, before the nation had officially joined the war, further increased tensions between Germany and the USA.



**"WAVE AFTER WAVE OF
NEW TYPE IX SUBMARINES
FOLLOWED UNTIL US
DEFENCES IMPROVED WITH
THE INTRODUCTION OF
DESTROYERS AND
NAVAL CONVOYS"**

OPERATION DRUMBEAT

13 JANUARY 1942

The first U-boats reached US waters in Operation Drumbeat, a patrol targeting Allied shipping off the North American coast.

■ The torpedo that sank Reuben James was probably intended to strike one of the merchant ships it was escorting

■ Dixie Arrow, one of many American tankers lost off the east coast in 1942

DECLARATION OF WAR

11 DECEMBER 1941

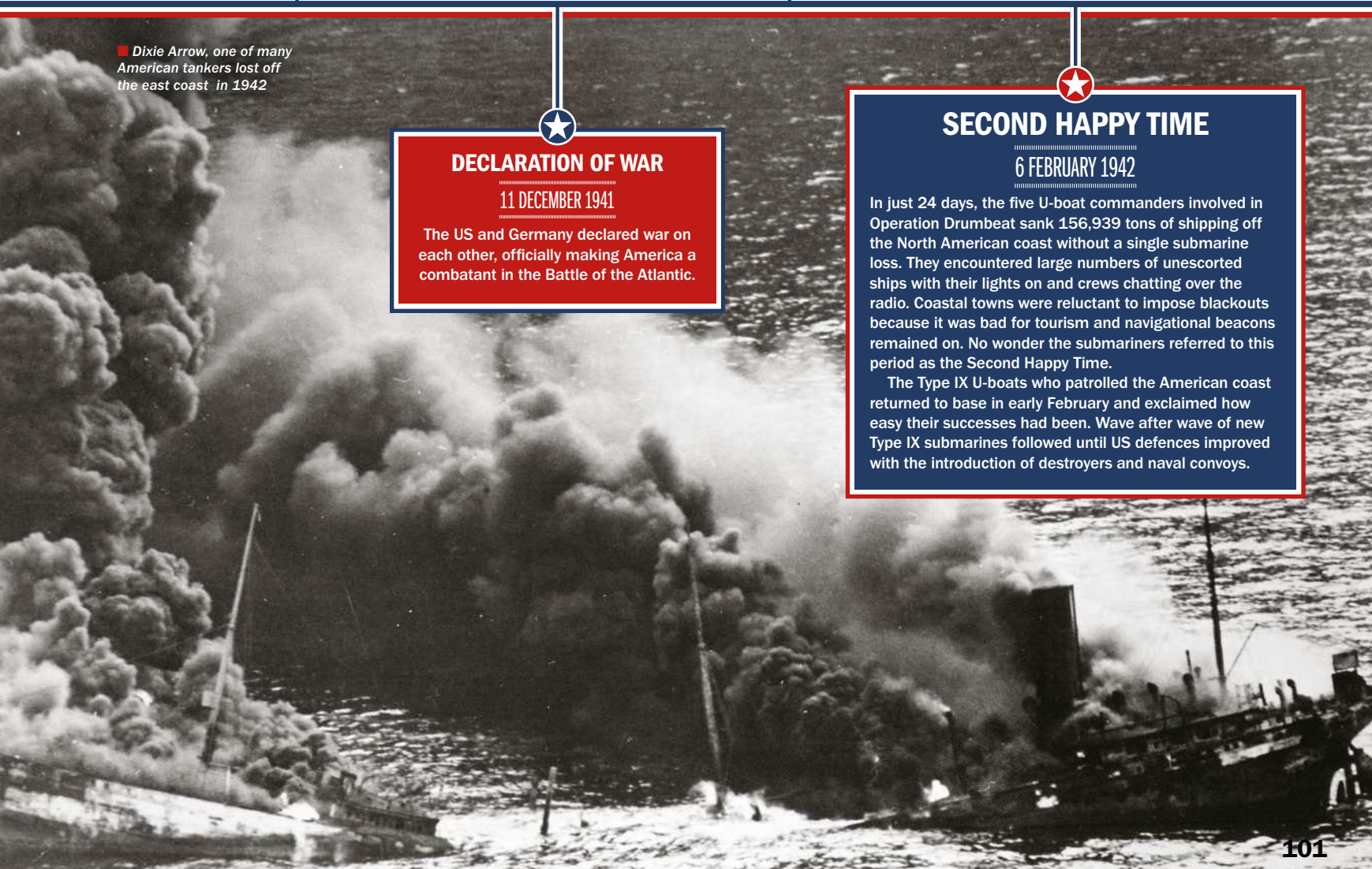
The US and Germany declared war on each other, officially making America a combatant in the Battle of the Atlantic.

SECOND HAPPY TIME

6 FEBRUARY 1942

In just 24 days, the five U-boat commanders involved in Operation Drumbeat sank 156,939 tons of shipping off the North American coast without a single submarine loss. They encountered large numbers of unescorted ships with their lights on and crews chatting over the radio. Coastal towns were reluctant to impose blackouts because it was bad for tourism and navigational beacons remained on. No wonder the submariners referred to this period as the Second Happy Time.

The Type IX U-boats who patrolled the American coast returned to base in early February and exclaimed how easy their successes had been. Wave after wave of new Type IX submarines followed until US defences improved with the introduction of destroyers and naval convoys.



FIRST U-BOAT SUNK

14 APRIL 1942

A shift in the balance of power on the eastern seaboard began with a frantic midnight engagement in April 1942. USS Roper, a destroyer, used its British radar system to detect a surfaced submarine lying close to Bodie Island Light in North Carolina. The U-boat, U-85, turned away and fled south, unsuccessfully firing a torpedo when Roper got too close. The submarine dived after the range closed further, but not before being raked with machine gun fire. After 11 depth charges were dropped, a number of crew were found dead in the water.

U-85 was the first submarine sunk in American waters. By the end of the year, eight more suffered the same fate – the result of an increased number of US ships on coastal patrol and the use of convoys in American waters.

CAPTURE OF KLAUS BARGSTEN

2 JUNE 1943

Captain Klaus Bargsten was reading in his bunk in the early hours of the morning when the submarine he commanded, U-521, was attacked by a US Navy submarine chaser. The depth charges rendered many of the sub's instruments ineffective, so Bargsten ordered the U-boat to surface and climbed the conning tower to make a visual inspection of the damage. However, the submarine chaser was still on the prowl and hit U-521 with artillery fire. Bargsten made the order to abandon ship, but the U-boat sank quickly before anybody else could get out.

Bargsten, the sole survivor, was plucked from the sea and taken to Norfolk Naval Base for questioning. The information he provided shed light on several unexplained losses and encounters, and also provided an insight into U-boat tactics and strategy.

U-WHALE

28 FEBRUARY 1942

A large-scale sub hunt involving three US vessels ended in embarrassment when the target turned out to be a whale.

■ The 29 dead submariners from U-85 were buried in Virginia in a night-time ceremony

BLACK MAY

24 MAY 1943

The U-boat campaign was temporarily halted after one-quarter of operational submarines were sunk in the month of May.

■ U-848 attempts – ultimately without success – to escape US Navy Liberator from which this photograph was taken

THE MID-ATLANTIC GAP CLOSES

18 MARCH 1943

The battle reached a turning point in the spring of 1943 as U-boat losses increased while their tallies of victims decreased. Part of the reason submarines became less effective was the closing of the mid-Atlantic gap, a strip of ocean previously unreachable by aircraft, leaving convoys more vulnerable to underwater wolfpacks.

In the middle of March, President Roosevelt issued the second of only two direct orders during the war (the first was to give Operation Torch precedence over other campaigns). Roosevelt ordered his chief of naval operations to transfer 60 B-24 Liberators from the Pacific to the Atlantic. These aircraft were stripped of armour to give them a longer range and were able to attack surfaced submarines. The 'Black Pit' of the mid-Atlantic was no longer quite so dangerous.

BX AND XB CONVOYS

20 MARCH 1942

A new system of convoys is initiated between Boston and Halifax to counter the U-boat threat along North America's east coast.

■ Captured submariners like this one from April 1943 were a rare source of intelligence – two-thirds of U-boats sunk that year left no survivors

CONVOY HX 300 ARRIVES SAFELY

3 AUGUST 1944

On 17 July, 102 merchant ships – 76 of which flew an American flag – set sail from New York with a naval escort. Over the next three days they met up with merchant ships sailing from Canada, creating the largest convoy of the war. During the tense crossing of the Atlantic, all eyes were on the water, keeping a watch for prowling U-boat wolfpacks. However, three weeks later, every ship had docked without a single submarine attack having occurred.

The vast majority of the American vessels were Liberty ships, a low-cost, mass-produced cargo ship churned out in great number by American shipyards during the war. American industry was able to vastly exceed the losses suffered at the hands of the U-boats – in total, 2,710 Liberty ships totalling 38.5 million tons were constructed during the war.

SURRENDER OF GERMANY

8 MAY 1945

The German admission of defeat brought to an official end the longest continuous campaign of World War II.

CAPTURE OF U-505

4 JUNE 1944

U-505 was captured by the US Navy – the code books and machines on board helped the Allies crack the Enigma code.

■ Convoys offered greater protection than single ships; the numbers in them grew as the war progressed

PAUL HAMILTON SINKS

20 APRIL 1944

The German threat in the Battle of the Atlantic was not confined to submarine warfare. One of the most deadly attacks occurred when Paul Hamilton, a Liberty ship transporting troops and high explosives, was attacked by Luftwaffe bombers.

The flight of 23 Junkers Ju 88 that sank Paul Hamilton sighted the ship – voyaging from Hampton Roads to Gibraltar – when it was 48 kilometres off the coast of Algeria. Being a veteran of four previous convoys meant nothing when the bombers dived low and fast to avoid anti-aircraft fire. A successful torpedo strike ignited the high explosives on board, causing a massive explosion. When the smoke cleared, no trace of the ship remained.

D-DAY

6 JUNE 1944

The heavily defended U-boat bases in France were bypassed by the Allied liberators as they were not considered targets of strategic value.

LAST ACTION IN AMERICANS WATERS

6 MAY 1945

By the last months of the war, submarine attacks had reduced to little more than inconveniences. On 5 May, the final American merchant ship was sunk in the war when U-853, lying in wait off Point Judith, Rhode Island, fired on the coal ship Black Point. The attack led to an overnight search and destroy mission in which a US destroyer, two destroyer escorts and a frigate dropped over 100 depth charges. Aerial support came in the guise of two airships the following morning.

When planking, life rafts, clothing and an officer's cap floated to the surface, the destruction of the U-boat was confirmed with the loss of all 55 men on board. The same morning, U-881 was destroyed by depth charges dropped from USS Farquhar off the coast of Newfoundland. The U-boat threat was finally over.

■ Depth charges explode in the hunt for U-853 off Rhode Island

■ 580 were killed when the Paul Hamilton was destroyed, making it one of the costliest Liberty ship losses of the war

BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

IN ORDER TO STOP JAPANESE EXPANSION INTO THE PACIFIC DURING WORLD WAR II, ALLIED FORCES WOULD HAVE TO FACE OFF WITH THEIR FORMIDABLE NAVY IN THE CORAL SEA

CORAL SEA 4-7 MAY 1942

By early May 1942, Japan had almost accomplished the seizure of the southern region that had been planned in 1941. The perimeter of the new imperial area was to be completed by the capture of the remaining southern part of the island of New Guinea, the islands of Malaita and Guadalcanal in the Solomons, and the outlying Nauru and Ocean Island. The decision to take these last outposts was made to ensure Japanese forces could cut the supply line between the USA and Australia and end any remaining threat from the south. Admiral Yamamoto organised a task force in April under the command of Vice Admiral Shigeyoshi Inoue comprising four separate elements: a force to seize Port Moresby and southeast New Guinea, a second to capture the Solomon Islands, where air bases were to be established, a third force and a carrier group around Shokaku and Zuikaku designed to engage and destroy any US naval units sent to the area. The plan was to be completed between 3 and 7 May.

■ American Navy torpedo aircraft attack the Japanese light carrier Shoho on 7 May 1942 during the Battle of the Coral Sea. The ship was the first Japanese carrier to be sunk and its loss forced the Japanese to abandon their attack on southern New Guinea



■ Vice-Admiral Frank Fletcher who commanded the task force for the Coral Sea battle. Nicknamed "Black Jack", he had a reputation for excessive caution and was posted to the North Pacific in October 1942, away from the main action of the campaign

Intelligence information warned Admiral Nimitz, who had recently taken over command of the Pacific Fleet, that a major Japanese force was moving south. He sent carriers Lexington and Yorktown to rendezvous with an assortment of smaller Allied ships to oppose the Japanese. The Allied force, commanded by Rear Admiral Frank Fletcher, arrived in the Coral Sea just as the Japanese began their assault on Tulagi. On 4 May aircraft from the Yorktown attacked but failed to repel the Japanese landing. Poor weather and visibility made it hard for the two sides to find each other. Fletcher mistook a light force converging on Port Moresby for the main Japanese carrier units and sent his aircraft to intercept. They sank light carrier Shoho on 7 May, after which the New Guinea task force turned back, anxious about the loss of air cover.

The Japanese carrier units, under the command of Rear Admiral Takeo Takagi, dispatched their aircraft despite poor conditions, but they failed to find the US fleet, sinking a tanker and a destroyer they found stranded on their own. Some of the Japanese planes, at the end of their fuel supply, were attacked by American fighters, and some tried to land on Yorktown, which they finally located but mistook for their own. Only a fifth of the aircraft returned safely to their home carriers.

The following day the fleets met. Fletcher's naval aviators attacked Shokaku, and with just three bombs disabled the engine-repair shops and the flight deck, but failed to inflict any damage on Zuikaku. The two US carriers were both badly hit by the experienced Japanese crews, Lexington so severely that it had to be sunk by a US destroyer later that evening, but Takagi decided to withdraw after the loss of so many pilots, and the battle came to an inconclusive end. The Battle of the Coral Sea, as it came to be known, was a confused engagement in which poor intelligence made matters worse. Nevertheless, the Allied fleet succeeded in turning back the invasion of New Guinea and held the Japanese advance at the Solomons. Both Japanese carriers were forced to abandon the next part of Yamamoto's strategy to cut the trans-Pacific route at Midway Island and in the process to meet and destroy the US Pacific Fleet. The battle was above all a welcome relief for the Allies after months of remorseless Japanese advance.



■ USS carrier Yorktown nears the Coral Sea, April 1942, photographed from a TBD-1 Torpedo plane that has just been launched from the carrier



■ A destroyed Japanese Nakajima B5N Type 97 "Kate" bomber from the carrier Shokaku

"THE JAPANESE CARRIER UNITS, UNDER THE COMMAND OF REAR ADMIRAL TAKEO TAKAGI DISPATCHED THEIR AIRCRAFT DESPITE POOR CONDITIONS, BUT THEY FAILED TO FIND THE US FLEET"

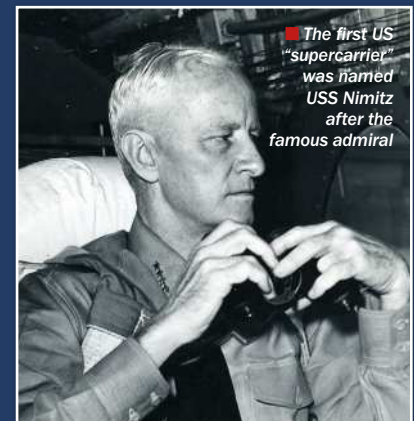


■ The USS carrier Lexington on fire after attack by Japanese carrier aircraft from Shokaku and Zuikaku on 8 May 1942. The carrier had to be sunk later that evening by a US navy destroyer

FLEET ADMIRAL CHESTER NIMITZ

The hard-nosed commander who led the US Pacific Fleet

Born of German-American parents, Nimitz joined the US Navy in 1901 and rose to distinction in the interwar years as an expert on the new submarine arm. In 1938, he was promoted to vice admiral and the next year became chief of the Bureau of Navigation. On 17 December 1941, he was chosen as commander-in-chief of the US Pacific Fleet with the rank of admiral, and set out to reverse the disaster of Pearl Harbor. He was made overall commander-in-chief of Allied forces in the Pacific Ocean in March 1942 and was responsible as fleet commander for the Coral Sea and Midway victories. His "island-hopping" strategy led to the isolation and defeat of Japanese garrisons in the central Pacific for which he was rewarded with the title of Fleet Admiral in December 1944. After the war he became Chief of Naval Operations, retiring from active duty in December 1947.



■ The first US "supercarrier" was named USS Nimitz after the famous admiral

BATTLE OF MIDWAY

THE SUMMER OF 1942 SAW ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST DECISIVE SEA BATTLES OF WORLD WAR II AS THE USA AND JAPAN FOUGHT FOR DOMINANCE

MIDWAY ATOLL 4-7 JUNE 1942

The Japanese failure at the Battle of the Coral Sea confirmed the commander-in-chief of the Japanese navy, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, in his conviction that decisive action should be taken against the US Pacific Fleet to prevent further American activity in the western Pacific area. The tiny island of Midway, lying between Hawaii and Japan, was chosen as the target not because it was important in itself, but as the bait to obtain the decisive fleet engagement that would eradicate the American threat. Preparations for Operation 'MI' began in early May, just before the Battle of the Coral Sea.

Midway was claimed by the USA in 1859, occupied in 1903 and finally turned into a small naval and flying-boat base in 1940. The naval force sent across the Pacific from Japan was vast for the invasion of a small island, but that was not its principal purpose. The Japanese fleet was divided into five attacking groups: a carrier strike force, the heart of the operation, under the command of Vice Admiral Nagumo; an occupation force for Midway; the main battle fleet of seven battleships, including Yamamoto's huge flagship, the 72,000-ton Yamato, designed to eliminate the US fleet; a diversionary force to capture two of the

Aleutian Islands in the north; and finally a forward screen of submarines. The date for the attack on Midway was set for 5 June Japanese time, 4 June in the United States. Japanese intelligence on the US carrier force was scant, but it was assumed the two remaining carriers after the Battle of the Coral Sea were far away to the south, protecting Australia.

This was the first of the Japanese miscalculations. Nimitz had two carriers, Hornet and Enterprise, and thanks to an extraordinary technical feat of repair, the damaged Yorktown was also available by 31 May. The force was placed under the overall command of Admiral Fletcher, and the carriers placed under Rear Admiral Raymond Spruance. Against the Japanese four carriers, seven battleships, 12 cruisers and 44 destroyers, the Americans could muster only three carriers, eight cruisers and 15 destroyers. The one solid advantage enjoyed by the American side was intelligence, and without it the battle could not have been fought and won. The Fleet Radio Unit Pacific at Pearl Harbor could decode and decipher the Japanese main code, JN-25, and knew by 21 May that Operation MI meant Midway. A few days later, the exact time for the attack on Midway and the Aleutians was



■ A Japanese torpedo bomber takes off from the deck of a Japanese carrier. During the Battle of Midway almost 3/4 of Japanese carrier pilots were killed or injured



ADMIRAL RAYMOND A SPRUANCE

The intelligent and cool-headed second-in-command

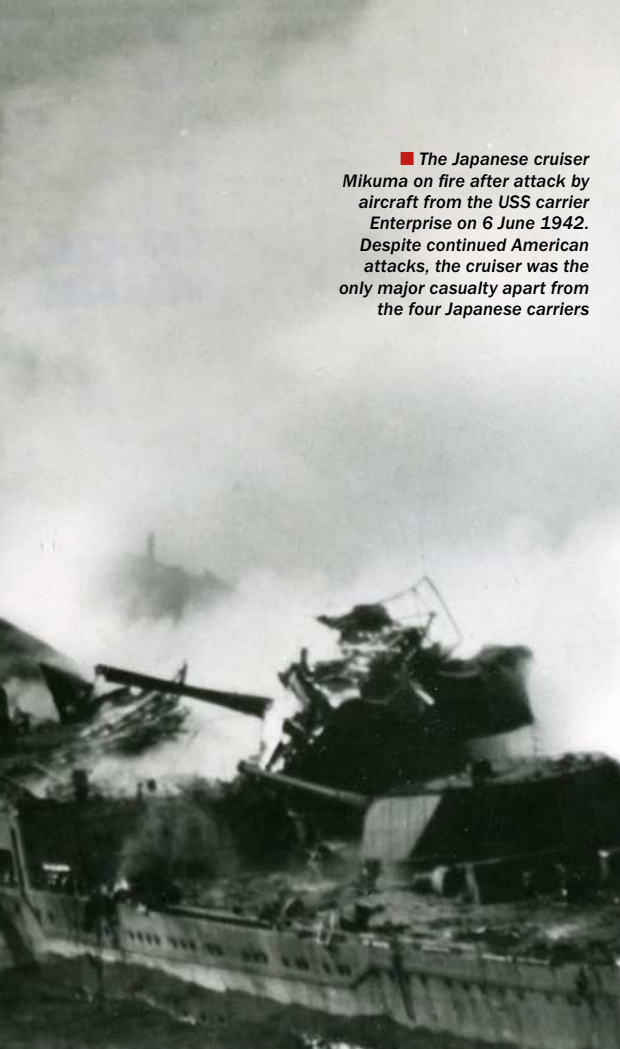
Admiral Spruance became a career naval officer before the First World War and by 1940 was commander of the Caribbean Sea Frontier. After the attack on Pearl Harbor he commanded Cruiser Squadron Five in the Pacific under command of Admiral William Halsey. Spruance – nicknamed 'electric brain' – had a reputation for a sharp mind and cool temperament.

When Halsey fell ill in May 1942, he recommended Spruance to control his carrier task force for the Battle of Midway. After the engagement he became Nimitz's chief-of-staff and in mid-1943 was appointed to command the Central Pacific Force, which went on to capture Iwo Jima and Okinawa. He succeeded Nimitz as commander of the Pacific Fleet in late 1945, and then became president of the Naval War College until his retirement in 1948. Between 1952 and 1955 he was the US ambassador to the Philippines.



■ Blazing oil tanks on Midway Island during the Japanese operation on 4 June 1942

■ The Japanese cruiser Mikuma on fire after attack by aircraft from the USS carrier Enterprise on 6 June 1942. Despite continued American attacks, the cruiser was the only major casualty apart from the four Japanese carriers



also known. The American strategy was to sail the small carrier force northeast of Midway, out of range of Japanese search aircraft and submarines. Once the Japanese units had been identified by aircraft from Midway, the plan was to attack them with waves of torpedo- and dive-bombers but at all costs to avoid the big fleet engagement sought by Yamamoto.

The battle represented a great risk for the American side, heavily outnumbered in ships and aircraft, but the failure of Japanese reconnaissance to detect Spruance's force until well after the attack on Midway had begun left the Japanese carriers exposed to a dangerous counterattack as their aircraft were refuelled and rearmed on deck. The American torpedo bombers were too slow and the force was decimated, but around 50 Dauntless dive-bombers, undetected by the Japanese, dropped enough bombs onto the carriers' crowded decks to create havoc.

By early next morning all four Japanese fleet carriers, Hiryu, Kaga, Soryu and Nagumo's flagship, Akagi, were sunk. Yamamoto ordered his battleships forward to destroy the enemy but in thick fog they could not be found, and without air cover the ships faced a great risk. Yorktown was damaged by aircraft, and sunk by a submarine three days later, but the great fleet engagement eluded the Japanese.

The American victory was decisive, and it was achieved in a battle conducted and won by aircraft from two carrier forces that never even sighted each other. Senior Japanese commanders later admitted that this was the turning point in Japan's war effort. In 1943 and 1944, Japanese shipyards turned out another seven aircraft carriers, the United States built 90. The death and injury of 70 per cent of Japan's highly trained naval pilots was never satisfactorily made good.

"AROUND 50 DAUNTLESS DIVE-BOMBERS DROPPED ENOUGH BOMBS ONTO THE CARRIERS' CROWDED DECKS TO CREATE HAVOC"



■ The aftermath of a Japanese diversionary attack on Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Islands off the coast of Alaska on 3 June 1942

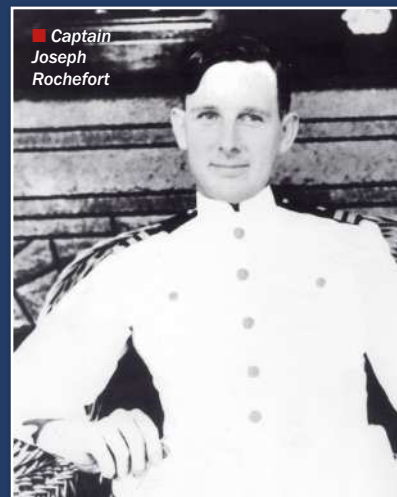


■ US Navy Dauntless dive-bombers attacking units of the Japanese fleet during the Battle of Midway. In the centre of the picture can be seen a burning Japanese cruiser, Mikuma

CAPTAIN JOSEPH ROCHEFORT

Decoding the Japanese military communication

Captain Rochefort was one of the leading American experts on cryptanalysis. He joined the US Navy in 1918, was trained in code-breaking and learned fluent Japanese. His wide intelligence experience led to his appointment early in 1941 to head the radio intercept office at Pearl Harbor. Here he assembled a large team of cryptanalysts and linguists who made it their task to break the Japanese naval code JN-25. During the early part of 1942 they succeeded in breaking the complicated cipher mechanism and could read some of the messages, although dates proved difficult. This intelligence information – known, like its European counterpart, as ULTRA – was vital for the Battle of Midway. The dating system was finally broken in May and Rochefort's unit provided the vital intelligence needed for the coming battle. From 1942 to 1946 he was in Washington as head of the Pacific Strategic Intelligence Group, and he retired in 1946.



■ Captain Joseph Rochefort



■ The US aircraft carrier Yorktown was hit by Japanese torpedo-bombers in two attacks on 4 June 1942. Listing badly, the carrier ultimately had to be abandoned

OPERATION OVERLORD

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SECOND FRONT IN WESTERN EUROPE HASTENED THE END OF NAZI GERMANY AND WORLD WAR II IN EUROPE

WORDS MIKE HASKEW

NORTHERN FRANCE 6 JUNE - 30 AUGUST 1944

Adolf Hitler boasted that the Atlantic Wall, a string of fortifications stretching from the North Sea to the French frontier with Spain, was impregnable. Nevertheless, Allied commanders knew that the establishment of a second front in Western Europe was a prerequisite to the final defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II.

Since the summer of 1941, Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin had clamoured for a second front. His Red Army had borne the brunt of the ground war against the Nazis. However, the United States and Great Britain were not militarily prepared to launch such an endeavour until mid-1944. Dubbed Operation Overlord, the long-awaited invasion occurred on D-Day, 6 June, along an 80-kilometre stretch of coastline in French Normandy.

When finally unleashed after a weather delay, Operation Overlord involved more than 150,000 troops, nearly 7,000 ships and 4,100 aircraft. In the early morning, Allied soldiers stormed



ashore on five invasion beaches. From east to west, the British Third Division assaulted Sword Beach, the 50th Division Gold Beach, the Canadian Third Division Juno Beach, and elements of the American First and 29th Divisions Omaha and the Fourth Division Utah beaches respectively.

American General Dwight D Eisenhower led the senior Allied command structure, while his immediate subordinates were British. Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder was deputy supreme commander; Admiral Bertram Ramsay led the seaborne effort; Air Chief Marshal Trafford Leigh-Mallory the air; and General Bernard Law Montgomery the ground forces. American General Omar N Bradley commanded the US First Army under Montgomery, and General Miles Dempsey led the British Second Army.

The Allies knew that Operation Overlord was fraught with risk. The assault troops had to force a lodgment on the Norman coast and not only defend against certain German

“STILL THE RISKIEST PROPOSITION OF OVERLORD WAS THE PREDAWN INSERTION OF THREE AIRBORNE DIVISIONS, PARACHUTING OR GLIDING INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE TO SECURE THE FLANKS OF THE LANDINGS, HOLDING VITAL BRIDGES”

counterattacks from elements of Army Group B under the resourceful Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, but also somehow rapidly expand the beachhead inland. The naval forces would be subject to attack from enemy submarines and air assets in the relative confinement of the English Channel.

Still, the riskiest proposition of Overlord was the predawn insertion of three airborne divisions, parachuting or gliding into the countryside to secure the flanks of the landings, holding vital bridges and causeway exits,

■ Troops of the US 16th Infantry Regiment, First Division, wade ashore in the Fox Green sector of Omaha Beach on D-Day



BOYS OF POINTE DU HOC

US Army Rangers scaled cliffs on D-Day to attack German gun emplacements that threatened the invasion beaches

Among the daring exploits of D-Day, a detachment of 225 US Army Rangers of the Second Battalion scaled the 30-metre cliffs at Pointe du Hoc, six kilometres west of Omaha Beach. The Rangers' objective was a German battery believed to house six 155-millimetre howitzers capable of delivering devastating fire against either Omaha or Utah Beach.

Led by Lieutenant Colonel James Rudder, the Rangers were to silence the guns after climbing the promontory while under enemy fire. On paper, it looked like a suicide run. But the Rangers were equal to the task. They planned to use grappling hooks on ropes fired toward the summit and then work their way hand over hand to the top. They also borrowed ladders from the London Fire Brigade for the task.

Once in position, the Rangers found that most of their ropes were soaked. With the added weight the catapults failed to reach the desired height. Undeterred, the Rangers won the crest and drove the Germans off only to discover that the guns had been removed. Five of them were later located in an apple orchard and destroyed with thermite grenades.

The Rangers stood their ground, fighting off several counterattacks until relieved on 8 June. Of those engaged, only 90 remained unscathed.



■ After the capture of Pointe du Hoc, German prisoners march into captivity near the command post of Lieutenant Colonel James Rudder



■ American soldiers crouch behind the gunwales of a landing craft as they approach Omaha Beach on D-Day

disrupting communications, and standing fast until relieved with a linkup of advancing troops off the beaches. The American 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions came down widely dispersed in the west, while the British Sixth Airborne's glider landings occurred on the eastern flank. Casualties were expected to run high, but Eisenhower deemed the operation worthwhile. In the end, the airborne forces performed with great distinction.

At approximately 11.30pm on 5 June, the invasion armada set sail for the Normandy coast. Soon after, transport aircraft clawed their way into the sky carrying the airborne contingent. It was hoped that naval bombardment and frequent air raids against German defensive positions and infrastructure had paved the way for a successful landing and an immediate push inland that would secure vital objectives and close gaps between the beaches swiftly.

At first light, Allied troops stormed ashore in Normandy. On Sword Beach, the British fought their way inland to capture the German defensive position at La Breche and reached the outskirts of Ouistreham. At Gold, the British seized Port-en-Bessin, six kilometres inland. Heavy seas hampered the landing of

reinforcements and the movement of supporting tanks, and though their beachhead was secure, the British failed to take the transport and communications centre of Caen, a primary D-Day objective.

At Juno, the Canadians faced intense opposition and fought for two hours to dislodge defenders along the shoreline. Eventually, the Canadians linked up with the British from Gold Beach, but a gap still remained between Gold and Sword. The Allies were actually aided by the ineptitude of the German response. The bulk of their armoured divisions were held in reserve to be released only on Hitler's personal order. Therefore, the German 21st Panzer Division mounted the only substantial counterattack of the day, driving between Sword and Gold beaches all the way to the coast. However, there were no reinforcements to exploit the gain and the Germans were compelled to withdraw.

The American landings at Utah Beach went fortuitously awry. The Fourth Division actually came ashore in the wrong place, but assistant division commander General Theodore Roosevelt Jr proclaimed, "We'll start the war from here!" Within just a few hours, the Americans were plunging ahead against unexpectedly light resistance.

Though many of the enemy troops that garrisoned the Atlantic Wall defences were static units or conscripts from occupied countries, the 352nd Infantry Division was an experienced formation that took full advantage of the cliffs at Omaha Beach and made the broad expanse of the shoreline at low tide a killing ground.

Omaha was the most horrific battle of D-Day. Many US soldiers of the first wave were shot as soon as the ramps of their landing craft were lowered. Others were weighed down by combat packs and drowned. Rough seas swamped amphibious tanks meant to add firepower to the assault. The situation was in such doubt at mid-morning that General Bradley contemplated withdrawing the troops from the beach and diverting reinforcements to quieter sectors.

Then, the resilience of the GIs prevailed as junior and noncommissioned officers got up from the makeshift shelter of beach obstacles to take on German strongpoints one by one. Finally, in the afternoon the situation at Omaha stabilised. But the beachhead was precarious and a 14-kilometre gap existed between the Americans at Omaha and the Canadians at Juno. The distance was even greater to a link-up with the Fourth Division at Utah.

Despite the difficulties encountered on D-Day at the cost of 2,500 dead and another 7,500 wounded, the Allied forces solidified their foothold in Normandy. Looking beyond the beaches, though, weeks of tough fighting lay ahead. Operation Overlord, the Normandy campaign, proceeded – painfully at times.

Montgomery hammered away at Caen, but the Germans held the city and the dominating

"ON 25 JULY, COBRA WAS UNLEASHED. THE DEFENDING GERMANS WERE STUNNED, AND ONE DIVISION – THE CRACK PANZER LEHR – CEASED TO FUNCTION DUE TO THE ABSOLUTE FEROCITY OF THE BOMBING"

high ground of Hill 112 for more than a month. Still, the British commander contended that his design was to draw the bulk of the German armoured divisions, finally released by Hitler, upon himself to enable the Americans on his right flank to advance.

The Americans were challenged by the terrain as centuries-old hedgerows made a patchwork of the Norman countryside, turning meadows into free-fire zones and country lanes into deathtraps. Progress was slow as some formations turned toward the Cotentin Peninsula and the deepwater port of Cherbourg while others maintained the advance against the town of Saint Lo and other objectives that would unhinge the German resistance.

While the British finally secured Caen in mid-July, the Americans launched an all-out effort to break free of the hedgerows. Bradley's plan, called Operation Cobra, involved the saturation bombing of German positions along the front lines followed by a swift assault of American armour and infantry that would lead the spearheads into open country.

On 25 July, Cobra was unleashed. The defending Germans were stunned, and one division – the crack Panzer Lehr – ceased to function due to the absolute ferocity of the bombing. During the next 48 hours, American forces advanced 27 kilometres. Simultaneously, renewed British efforts combined to unhinge the German defences in Normandy. A foolhardy counterattack ordered by Hitler served only to further weaken the German forces, depleting their armoured contingent significantly.

With the enemy in full retreat a golden opportunity to bag the entire German Seventh Army and other formations presented itself. A giant Allied pincer movement converged on the area of Falaise. By mid-August Allied forces had thrown a bridgehead across the River Seine while Montgomery fixed the bulk of the German armour to the north and the Canadian First Army swung toward the enemy right flank. Meanwhile, the newly activated Third Army under fiery General George S Patton Jr dashed across France, threatening to outflank the Germans in the south.

Although fanatical German resistance held the shoulders of the 'Falaise Pocket' open and allowed about 40,000 enemy soldiers to escape, Allied air and artillery turned the area into a meatgrinder. More than 10,000 Germans were killed and 50,000 captured. Eisenhower visited the battleground and remarked that he could not step in any direction without touching the body of a dead enemy soldier.

By late August, the Allies had destroyed organised German resistance in Normandy, vaulted the Seine, secured the Cotentin Peninsula, and raced across Brittany deep into the interior of France. On 25 August, Paris, the City of Light, was liberated after four arduous years of German occupation. Operation Overlord and the Normandy campaign were over. The Allies sustained over 200,000 casualties, more than 125,000 of them American, while the Germans lost well over 200,000 soldiers who were either killed, wounded, or captured.

More grievous losses were sustained during months of fighting, but in April 1945 American soldiers linked up with the Soviet Red Army, advancing west, at the German town of Torgau on the Elbe River. Within days, the Third Reich was no more.



■ American paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division discuss German troop dispositions with members of the French Resistance in Normandy



■ American troops accompany M4 Sherman medium tanks through the ravaged French village of Coutances during Operation Cobra



A COMMUNIQUÉ NEVER SENT

Although he had faith in the success of Operation Overlord, General Dwight Eisenhower was required to prepare for the worst

The weather was horrific but thousands of soldiers were poised to assault Hitler's Fortress Europe. While rain pelted and wind howled, General Dwight D Eisenhower assembled senior commanders at Southwick House in Portsmouth, England, early on 5 June 1944 to seek advice. Weather forecasts indicated a window for the D-Day operation, already postponed by 24 hours, to launch the next day.

Security concerns were rising. Such an immense operation could not remain secret indefinitely. The troops were ready. Another postponement would sap combat efficiency. The next favourable conditions were two weeks away. Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery piped,

"I would say go!" Others nodded, and Eisenhower pronounced, "OK, we'll go!"

Failure was unthinkable, but Eisenhower prepared a statement shouldering command responsibility: "Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based upon the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that Bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone."

Ultimately, the decision ordering Overlord was Eisenhower's. The message stayed in his pocket and was given to a staff officer as a souvenir.



■ General Dwight D Eisenhower, supreme Allied commander, poses with senior Allied officers during planning for Operation Overlord

■ The light carrier USS Princeton was hit by a single Japanese bomb and sunk in the Battle of the Sibuyan Sea



BATTLE OF LEYTE GULF

THE US AND IMPERIAL JAPANESE NAVIES SQUARED OFF IN A SERIES OF ENGAGEMENTS THAT CAME TO COMPRISE ONE OF HISTORY'S LARGEST EVER NAVAL BATTLES



LEYTE GULF 23-26 OCTOBER 1944

On 20 October 1944, after a heavy naval bombardment, Supreme Allied Commander, Southwest Pacific Area, General Douglas MacArthur commenced landing 200,000 US troops on the island of Leyte with the goal of liberating the Philippines from Japanese occupation. Offshore in Leyte Gulf lay Vice Admiral Thomas Kinkaid's US Seventh Fleet covering the amphibious invasion force and delivering the ammunition, food and medical supplies necessary to sustain the troops heading inland.

The days before the landings saw major American carrier-plane airstrikes on Formosa and the Ryukyu Islands, and hundreds of Japanese aircraft fell victim to American fliers. Coupled with the devastating losses from the Battle of the Philippine Sea that June, the Japanese Combined Fleet would be largely without air cover for the upcoming battle.

In response to the American landings at Leyte, the Japanese high command initiated its Sho-Go 1 plan with the intention of destroying



OPPOSING FORCES	
	
USA	JAPAN
Leaders: US Third Fleet Admiral William 'Bull' Halsey; US Seventh Fleet: Vice Admiral Thomas Kinkaid	Leaders: Centre Group: Vice-Admiral Takeo Kurita; Northern Force: Vice-Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa; Southern Force: Vice-Admiral Shoji Nishimura
Carriers: 8 fleet carriers, 8 light carriers, 18 escort carriers	Carriers: 1 fleet carrier, 3 light carriers
Battleships: 12	Battleships: 9
Cruisers: 24	Cruisers: 20
Destroyers: 166	Destroyers: 35
Aircraft: around 1,500	Aircraft: around 300



the US invasion fleet. This could not be achieved by Japan's very limited air power, so a Japanese surface fleet would have to do. It would first be necessary for the US Third Fleet under Admiral William 'Bull' Halsey to be lured away from its position to the northeast of the Philippines so that it could not interfere with the Combined Fleet's attack on the US amphibious fleet in Leyte Gulf.

Sho-Go 1 was a complicated battle plan, in keeping with most Japanese naval operations of the war. It called for a 17-ship Northern Force departing from Japanese home waters under Vice Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa and consisting of one fleet carrier and three light carriers, which were largely empty of airplanes, two battleships and 11 lesser warships to lure Halsey away. A powerful Centre Group under Vice Admiral Takeo Kurita comprising five battleships, ten heavy cruisers, two light cruisers and 15 destroyers, sailing from Borneo, would traverse the middle of the Philippines through the San Bernardino Strait

before making its way southward to the Leyte landing sites.

Lastly, the Southern Force, under Vice Admiral Shoji Nishimura, consisting of two battleships, one heavy cruiser and four destroyers, would also sail from Borneo and be joined by another squadron from the Ryukyu Islands of two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and seven destroyers under Vice Admiral Kiyohide Shima. These groups, especially the Centre Group, which contained the 70,000-ton super battleships Yamato and Mushashi, were supposed to fall upon the US invasion fleet at Leyte Gulf on 25 October and wipe it out with their big guns.

Oddly, neither the US nor Japanese fleets had overall commanders for their forces for the battle. The result was that there were instances of miscommunications and misunderstandings that had serious impacts on the course of the battle.

The Americans struck first when, early in the morning of 23 October, a pair of submarines,

USS Darter and USS Dace, intercepted Kurita's Centre Group off Palawan Island and torpedoed three Japanese cruisers, sinking two and badly damaging a third. Darter ran aground during the fight and the crew was rescued by Dace.

Kurita's position was now known to the Americans. Halsey's Third Fleet had its core striking power in fast carriers of Task Force 38 plus several battleships. TF 38 comprised three smaller task groups, each built around several aircraft carriers, while a fourth was away at the fleet anchorage at Ulithi Atoll, rearming and refuelling.

From his flagship, USS New Jersey, Halsey directed his three carrier task groups against Kurita's Centre Group. He also became aware of the approach of Nishimura's vanguard group of the Southern Force, and that it was ultimately headed for Leyte Gulf, through the Surigao Strait. He presumed that Kinkaid's Seventh Fleet had more than enough firepower to fend off Nishimura but he could not confer directly with Kinkaid. MacArthur, Kinkaid's

"MOST OF THE AMERICAN'S ATTENTION WAS GIVEN TO THE SUPER BATTLESHIP MUSASHI, WHICH WAS SUNK AFTER BEING HIT WITH 17 BOMBS AND 19 TORPEDOES"

superior, had forbidden any direct contact between the two fleets so messages took a long time. Halsey also recalled the fourth task group from its voyage to Ulithi.

On 24 October, in the Battle of the Sibuyan Sea, Halsey's carrier planes struck Kurita's Centre Group ships, which had no fighter protection at all. Most of the American's attention was given to the super battleship *Musashi*, which was sunk after being hit with 17 bombs and 19 torpedoes, as well as enduring 16 destructive near-misses. Kurita ordered a retreat away from the San Bernardino Strait.

American losses were minimal. However, the Third Fleet's pilots provided overly rosy reports of their attacks when they returned to their carriers and Halsey, accepting them at face value, came to the conclusion that Kurita was no longer a major threat. When a report of Ozawa's Northern Force location came, he decided to take the whole of Task Force 38, comprising the carrier units of Third Fleet, plus all of his battleships, north to demolish it. He thought that Seventh Fleet had enough firepower left to defend itself and the invasion beaches but this was predicated on the belief that Kurita's Centre Group had been hurt much worse than it had been. Crucially, Kinkaid never received clear notification that Halsey was taking his whole fleet away and continued to believe that some of it was guarding the San Bernardino Strait.

With the strongest elements of the US Navy now steaming north, Kurita turned his own fleet around and through the San Bernardino Strait. His Centre Group emerged in the early morning of 25 October to discover Seventh Fleet's Task Force 77.4 between it and the invasion fleet's transports. Task Force 77.4, under the command of Rear Admiral Thomas Sprague, was composed of three task units – Taffy 1, Taffy 2 and Taffy 3. Each was built around a clutch of escort carriers and some destroyers. Kinkaid's Seventh Fleet had been organised to provide air cover to the American troops ashore, not fight a major engagement against the Imperial Japanese Combined Fleet but that is what they had to do.

The outgunned and thoroughly surprised US Navy men of Taffy 3, under Rear Admiral Clifton Sprague, mounted a desperate defence, attacking the Japanese with their own carrier planes, dropping whatever bombs had been already loaded on them for close air support missions ashore and then strafing the enemy warships with the machine guns of their obsolescent Wildcat fighters. They were joined by their companion destroyers, which mounted near-suicidal attacks against the bigger

Japanese ships. Taffy 1 and 2 were still far away but immediately sent help. For the time being, Taffy 3 was all alone.

The ferocity of the American response, with destroyers charging in to trade fire with tremendous Japanese battleships coupled with the fog of war, convinced Kurita that he was facing the whole of Third Fleet, not a mere invasion fleet covering force. After losing three cruisers, he ordered a retreat. American losses were heavy but the vulnerable invasion fleet had been spared annihilation.

In the meantime, Third Fleet was still chasing Ozawa's Northern Force and, unfortunately, the rest of the Seventh Fleet was too far away. That same day, in the early morning darkness of 25 October, Nishimura's Southern Force had come up the Surigao Strait with Shima's group forming a distant rearguard to be met by the bombardment ships of Seventh Fleet under Rear Admiral Jesse Oldendorf.

Oldendorf's fleet was centred on six old battleships that had been repaired and sent back to war. They'd been providing fire support for the invasion forces but now they duelled with the Japanese. Nishimura's vanguard was built around the battleships *Yamashiro* and *Fuso*. A torpedo attack by American destroyers badly damaged *Fuso*, which later exploded. *Yamashiro* was struck by torpedoes, too, and then had to contend with the eruption of fire from Oldendorf's battleships and cruisers. Aided by fire control radar, an avalanche of heavy shells plunged into Nishimura's ships. *Yamashiro* was sunk before dawn, and the heavy cruiser *Mogami* was lost later that day. Shima, far to the rear, seeing the catastrophe that had befallen Nishimura's force, turned his own rearguard flotilla around and headed back out of Surigao Strait. The fight was history's last between battleships.

Having sought out Ozawa and at last found him, Halsey's Third Fleet carrier planes conducted strikes against the Northern Force on 25 October. Lacking airpower, the Japanese were mauled by the US Navy fliers. In this, the Battle of Cape Engaño, three Japanese carriers were sunk and a fourth was heavily damaged.

In the midst of the battle, Halsey received an encoded message from his commander demanding to know where he was. The escort carriers and destroyers of Taffy 3 at this moment were being pulverised and Third Fleet's battleships, which should have been protecting the invasion armada, were nowhere to be found. With a wounded Northern Force ripe for destruction, Halsey was forced to turn his battleships round and head back south to help the embattled Seventh Fleet – but by the time they arrived, the fight was over.

■ Wildcat fighters prepare to launch from USS *Kitkun* Bay during the Battle of Samar on 25 October 1944



01 THE JAPANESE PLAN

Kurita's Centre Group makes for the San Bernardino Strait heading for Leyte Gulf while Nishimura takes his fleet to the Surigao Strait, destination Leyte Gulf, where the US amphibious fleet lies offshore supporting the invasion forces. Ozawa's Northern Force steams south, intent upon luring away Halsey's Third Fleet.

02 BATTLE OF THE SIBUYAN SEA 24 OCTOBER 1944

On 23 October, US submarines *Darter* and *Dace* launch torpedoes against the ships of Kurita's Centre Group, sinking two Japanese cruisers. They also notify Halsey of Kurita's position. The next day, carrier planes from Halsey's Third Fleet attack Kurita's ships, sinking the battleship *Musashi*. Halsey now mistakenly believes Kurita's fleet is a spent, impotent force.

03 NORTHERN FORCE DECOY 24 OCTOBER 1944

Word reaches Halsey of Ozawa's Northern Force and he decides to give chase, just as the Japanese hoped he would. Halsey takes all of his warships with him, leaving nothing behind to guard the San Bernardino Strait and the approaches to the invasion beaches in Leyte Gulf.

04 BATTLE OFF SAMAR 25 OCTOBER 1944

Kurita's Centre Group, including the super battleship *Yamato*, is much more powerful than Halsey supposed, and it rushes down the now-unguarded San Bernardino Strait. The only ships between them and the amphibious ships are several small escort carriers and their protective destroyers of Taffy 3. In a chaotic action off Samar, the Americans counterattack desperately as immense Japanese naval cannons blast at them. The battleships of Seventh Fleet are in the faroff Surigao Strait and Halsey's Third Fleet is still pursuing Ozawa. Taffy 3 are on their own.

05 BATTLE OF THE SURIGAO STRAIT 25 OCTOBER 1944

In the early morning of 25 October, Nishimura's Southern Force has engaged the battleships of Kinkaid's Seventh Fleet in the Surigao Strait. In the last battleship action ever fought, the Japanese battleships Fuso and Yamashiro are sunk. Shima's flotilla, coming up behind Nishimura's ships, retreats back the way it had come.

06 BATTLE OF CAPE ENGAÑO 25 OCTOBER 1944

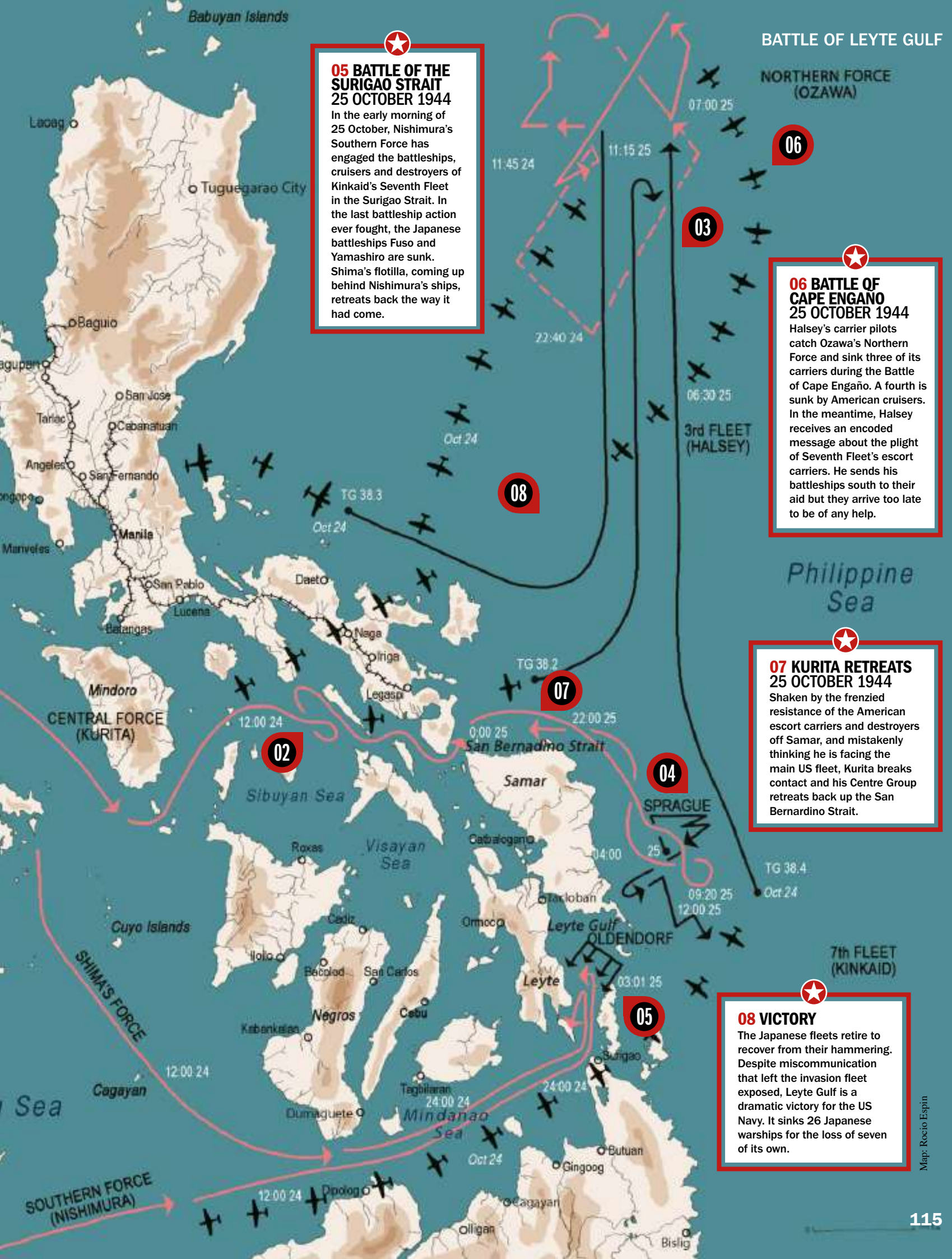
Halsey's carrier pilots catch Ozawa's Northern Force and sink three of its carriers during the Battle of Cape Engaño. A fourth is sunk by American cruisers. In the meantime, Halsey receives an encoded message about the plight of Seventh Fleet's escort carriers. He sends his battleships south to their aid but they arrive too late to be of any help.

07 KURITA RETREATS 25 OCTOBER 1944

Shaken by the frenzied resistance of the American escort carriers and destroyers off Samar, and mistakenly thinking he is facing the main US fleet, Kurita breaks contact and his Centre Group retreats back up the San Bernardino Strait.

08 VICTORY

The Japanese fleets retire to recover from their hammering. Despite miscommunication that left the invasion fleet exposed, Leyte Gulf is a dramatic victory for the US Navy. It sinks 26 Japanese warships for the loss of seven of its own.



BATTLE OF IWO JIMA

THE FINAL ASSAULT ON JAPANESE FORCES IN AN ATTEMPT TO UNLOCK THE MAINLAND

IWO JIMA, SOUTH PACIFIC 19 FEBRUARY – 26 MARCH 1945

After the decisive naval victory at the Battle of Midway in June 1942 (the first significant triumph in the Pacific for the Allies since Japan instigated the war at Pearl Harbor in December 1941), the US Navy was afforded some time to rebuild during 1943. Ships were in need of repair and refitting, seamen and ground troops required rest, and armaments needed replenishing.

It was during this lull that chief of command for the US's Pacific Fleet, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, refocused the tactics employed against the Japanese in the Pacific. Rather than take on the enemy directly, a campaign of island-hopping was instigated. Imperial forces had become heavily entrenched on certain key islands, making them difficult and costly targets for the Allies to capture. Instead, Nimitz's plan was to skirt around these nuclei, taking the less fortified islands in the Pacific as the US advanced towards the Japanese home islands.

The war was taking its toll on the Japanese as the US gained the upper hand in both the sea and the air. To make matters worse, Japanese cyphers were easily decoded by US intelligence, which kept Allied forces one step ahead of their enemy at all times. It was this advantage that led to the death of Marshal Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto in April 1943.

After the Japanese defeat at Guadalcanal, Yamamoto decided to go on a moral-boosting inspection of the South Pacific. Word of the Japanese Commander in Chief's plans reached US Navy intelligence, leading President Franklin D. Roosevelt to give the order: "Get Yamamoto." On the morning of 18 April 1943, the commander's plane was shot down by US forces, dealing an embarrassing blow to the Imperial Japanese Navy.

By April 1944, with momentum firmly on their side, US forces recaptured the Marshall Islands. Later the same year, it was the turn of the Mariana and Caroline Islands to fall into Allied hands, as plans for the invasion of Okinawa continued apace. The Japanese mainland was, metaphorically, in sight, with just one remaining target: Iwo Jima.

Located 1,200 kilometres south of Tokyo in the Volcanic Islands cluster, Iwo Jima was home to two Japanese airstrips, with a third under construction at the north end of the island. The Americans believed that this small island, just 20 square kilometres in size, was a strategic necessity for mainland attacks. If it could be captured, the island would be used as a base for escort fighters, as well as a landing patch for damaged B-29 bombers returning from the mainland.

But it wouldn't be so simple. The Japanese had also recognised the importance of Iwo Jima and, under the command of General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, they had begun to construct numerous inland bunkers in the summer of 1944 – a noted departure from the usual beach fortifications that were used by the Imperial Japanese forces. US aerial and submarine reconnaissance showed the supposed scale, with 642 pillboxes, blockhouses and other gun positions being identified prior to the assault.

A summer-long barrage designed to incapacitate the staunch Japanese defences ensued. For 74 days straight, US bombers pummelled this tiny blot of volcanic rock, while in the 72 hours running up to the invasion, the US Navy peppered Iwo Jima with shells, shattering the peace of this once idyllic South Pacific island.



WHO

Third, Fourth and Fifth US Marine Divisions battled against the Imperial Japanese Army's 109th Infantry.

WHAT

The Battle of Iwo Jima was an amphibious assault resulting in one of the bloodiest fights seen in the Pacific Theatre.

WHERE

Iwo Jima, a small island in the South Pacific's Volcano Island chain, 885 kilometres off the Japanese mainland.

WHY

To capture three airfields that would be used for damaged B-29 bombers that were returning from mainland sorties.

OUTCOME

It was the first time that American casualties outnumbered their Japanese counterparts, but the island was secured.



■ The US Navy Sixth Fleet photographed during the Battle of Iwo Jima



OPPOSING FORCES



VS



USA

Leader: General Holland Smith
Infantry: 1 Amphibious Corps (3 US Marine Divisions)
Tanks: c.150 M4A3 Sherman tanks (including 8 with the Mark 1 napalm flamethrower)
Game changers: The sheer number of men (around 70,000) thrown into battle over the course of the 36-day invasion.



JAPAN

Leader: General Tadamichi Kuribayashi
Infantry: 1 Imperial Infantry Division
Tanks: 22 from Lieutenant Colonel Baron Takeichi Nishi's 26th Tank Regiment
Game changers: 17km of tunnels, 642 pillboxes and 5,000 caves dotted around the island, along with the Japanese Infantry's tenacious defence.



The invasion begins

Codenamed 'Operation Detachment', the invasion proper began on 19 February 1945. The assault was tasked to the V Amphibious Marine Corps, led by General Holland 'Howlin' Mad' Smith, commanding general for the expeditionary troops once ashore. H-Hour was set for 9am, with the initial wave of armoured amphibian tractors coming ashore at 9.02am followed, three minutes later, by the first troop-carrying vehicles.

Spilling down the ramps, the Fourth and Fifth Marine Divisions, led by Major General Clifton B Cates and Major General Keller E Rockey respectively, waded through the ankle-deep volcanic ash of Iwo Jima's southwestern shore unopposed. The pre-invasion bombardment appeared to have cleared the island. However, unknown to the American forces, Kuribayashi's 109th Infantry Division was holed up in a network of over 5,000 caves and 17 kilometres of tunnels around Iwo Jima, waiting for the landing force's shelling to cease before showing their resistance.

There were murmurs among the US troops that the Japanese forces had been wiped out as the beach remained eerily quiet – a marked departure from previous infantry battles in the Pacific where shorelines were staunchly defended. The landing plans tasked the Fifth Division's 28th Regiment with taking Mount Suribachi, the 554-foot dormant volcano at the island's southern-most tip, by the end of D-Day. Likewise, the Fourth Division was scheduled to take Airfield 1 the same day. In the calm of the initial landing, both plans seemed achievable

yet, as the leading battalions crested the terrace at the end of the beach, General Kuribayashi gave the order to take up weapons.

The unmistakable chatter of machine gun fire from hidden Japanese emplacements cut down the initial waves of US troops, as artillery and mortar fire now began to pound the beaches. The soft volcanic soil, churned by the pre-invasion barrage, proved difficult to move through at pace, slowing the US advance. To make matters worse, fortifications on Mount Suribachi (protected by reinforced steel doors) rained down shells on the troops below.

Despite landing some 30,000 men, progress was slow and, by the time the US advance was called to a halt at 6pm, the Marine line fell well short of their D-Day targets. Still, Mount Suribachi's northeastern side had been surrounded by the 28th Regiment. The Fifth's 27th Regiment had been able to push towards the northwestern coastline but had taken heavy casualties in doing so, while the 4th Division skirted around Airfield 1's southern perimeter, securing a line towards the quarry near East Boat Basin.

During previous battles, Japanese banzai charges had caused considerable chaos throughout the night and, expecting similar attacks, US forces remained vigilant during darkness. General Kuribayashi did not believe in the usefulness of such tactics, though, feeling the banzai charge was a needless loss of life. This allowed the Third Battalion, 13th Marines (the artillery support for the 28th Regiment) to launch mortar and 105mm Howitzer shell attacks on Mount



Suribachi during the evening of 19 February in preparation of an ascent the next morning.

Capturing Mount Suribachi

Formulated by the 28th's leader, Colonel Harry B Liversedge, the Second and Third Battalions plunged forward at 8.30am on 20 February, with the First Battalion remaining in reserve. With regular gunfire proving useless against the Japanese emplacements, US troops turned to their trusty flamethrowers and grenades to flush defenders out of their foxholes. However, the Japanese (thanks to their comprehensive tunnel network) soon re-manned each supposedly clear pillbox. It would be a tactic that kept US forces fighting on all fronts across the island, keeping the Marines' progress to a minimum.

Just 200 yards of Mount Suribachi had been taken by 5pm on D+1. The following day, Liversedge's Marines attacked again after a 40-plane airstrike. With all three battalions heaving forward on one front, and with effective support from tanks and artillery, the 28th Regiment surged to the foot of the mountain. With the naval support covering the western side, the Marines had Suribachi surrounded by 22 February.

Finally, a day later, after reconnaissance from Second Battalion, a 40-man combat patrol was sent to the summit upon the orders of Lieutenant Colonel Chandler W Johnson. Under the command of First Lieutenant Harold G Schrier, they stormed the summit, raising a small US flag while under intense fire from the

“UNKNOWN TO THE AMERICAN FORCES, KURIBAYASHI'S 109TH INFANTRY DIVISION WAS HOLED UP IN A NETWORK OF OVER 5,000 CAVES AND 17 KILOMETRES OF TUNNELS”



■ Once the US Marines established a beachhead, the gradual grinding down of Japanese resistance began

remaining Japanese troops. Later that day, a larger flag would be raised in order to boost the morale of Marines across the island.

While the 28th Marine Regiment was still on Suribachi, the 26th and 27th Regiments of the 5th Division had pushed to Iwo Jima's western coast with suicidal rapidity, beginning their journey to the island's north sector on 20 February. Meanwhile, the Fourth Division's 23rd, 24th and 25th Regiments had secured 'Motoyama 1', the southern-most airfield. With the 5th Division surging the Marine line forward by around 1,000 yards, only the 23rd Regiment (fighting on the Fourth Division's left flank) could keep advancing at a similar pace.

Compared with the southern half of Iwo Jima, the northern sector was extremely well fortified, thanks to the efforts of Kuribayashi's men during that summer of 1944. The US Marines were finding the rocky terrain tough to negotiate, with every cleared pillbox and fortification soon reoccupied by Japanese forces, who were putting up a staunch and bloody resistance. Any gain was seemingly met with renewed fire from the shell-proof artillery emplacements and well-hidden tanks.

To aid the Fourth Division's charge, General Cates called the 21st Regiment of the Third Division ashore on 21 February. However, with Japanese forces pinning down the 25th Regiment on the eastern shores, the beach was congested, forcing the Third Division's relief through the centre of the Marine Corps line in place of the 23rd Regiment. By the morning of the 22nd, frontline units were beginning to be relieved, with the fresh Marine forces able to grind out short territorial gains. Yet Kuribayashi's men were alert to the fresh threat, pinning down units that were about to be replaced.

On D+4, V Marine Corps' Major General Harry Schmidt came ashore to survey the damage, ordering an attack the following morning. 24 February dawned with tanks thrusting through towards the second airfield, supported by the 21st Regiment. The Fifth Division's tanks flanked Motoyama 2's western edge, while the 4th Division armour edged forward on the airstrip's east perimeter. Aided by a 76-minute naval bombardment, the US Marines were advancing once again.

Into the meat grinder

The same day, the remaining regiments of Major General Graves B Erskine's Third Division were committed to Iwo Jima. The veteran division was tasked with advancing through the supposedly flat centre line of the island, going head-on into Kuribayashi's main defensive line on 25 February. With flame-throwing tanks incinerating the enemy (and 50 per cent of the corps' artillery missions aiding the Third Division) three days of toil finally paid off on the evening of 27 February.

The Japanese line cracked, and the 9th Regiment found itself controlling two hills north of the second airfield, while the following day, the 21st Regiment stormed through the remnants of Motoyama village to seize two hills commanding over the unfinished airfield three. Elsewhere, the Fifth Division had secured 'Hill 362A' after initial resistance from the Japanese proved deadly. 224 of the Division's

01 THE FIRST STRIKE

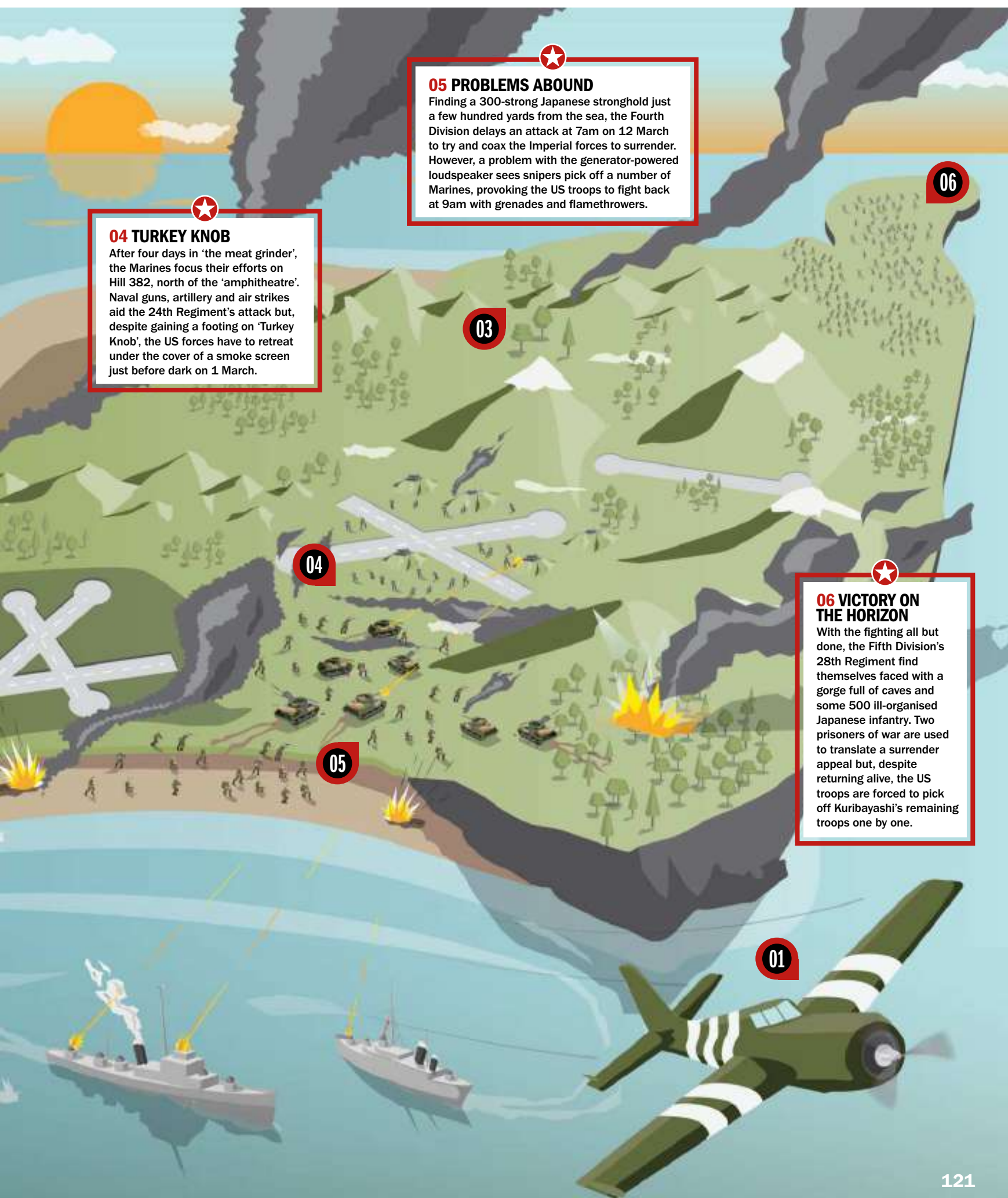
Although the amphibious invasion will begin on Iwo Jima's southern beaches on 19 February 1945, the first US air strike against the island hits the black, volcanic soil on 15 June 1944, with US bombers based in Saipan flying hundreds of offensive sorties.

02 A MIXED BAG

On 22 February, during the siege on Suribachi, the US support carrier, USS Bismarck Sea is sunk after being stung by a string of kamikaze attacks from Japanese planes. A day later, though, Marines raise the flag atop the mountain, with the moment immortalised on camera by Associated Press' Joe Rosenthal.

03 BUILDING UP THE BARRICADES

The northern half of the island sees much more Japanese fortification. Many of Baron Nishi's tanks have been buried up to the turret, providing camouflaged emplacements that decimate the Fourth Division's progress and require General Erskine's Third Division to be brought on shore en masse on D+4.



04 TURKEY KNOB

After four days in 'the meat grinder', the Marines focus their efforts on Hill 382, north of the 'amphitheatre'. Naval guns, artillery and air strikes aid the 24th Regiment's attack but, despite gaining a footing on 'Turkey Knob', the US forces have to retreat under the cover of a smoke screen just before dark on 1 March.

05 PROBLEMS AROUND

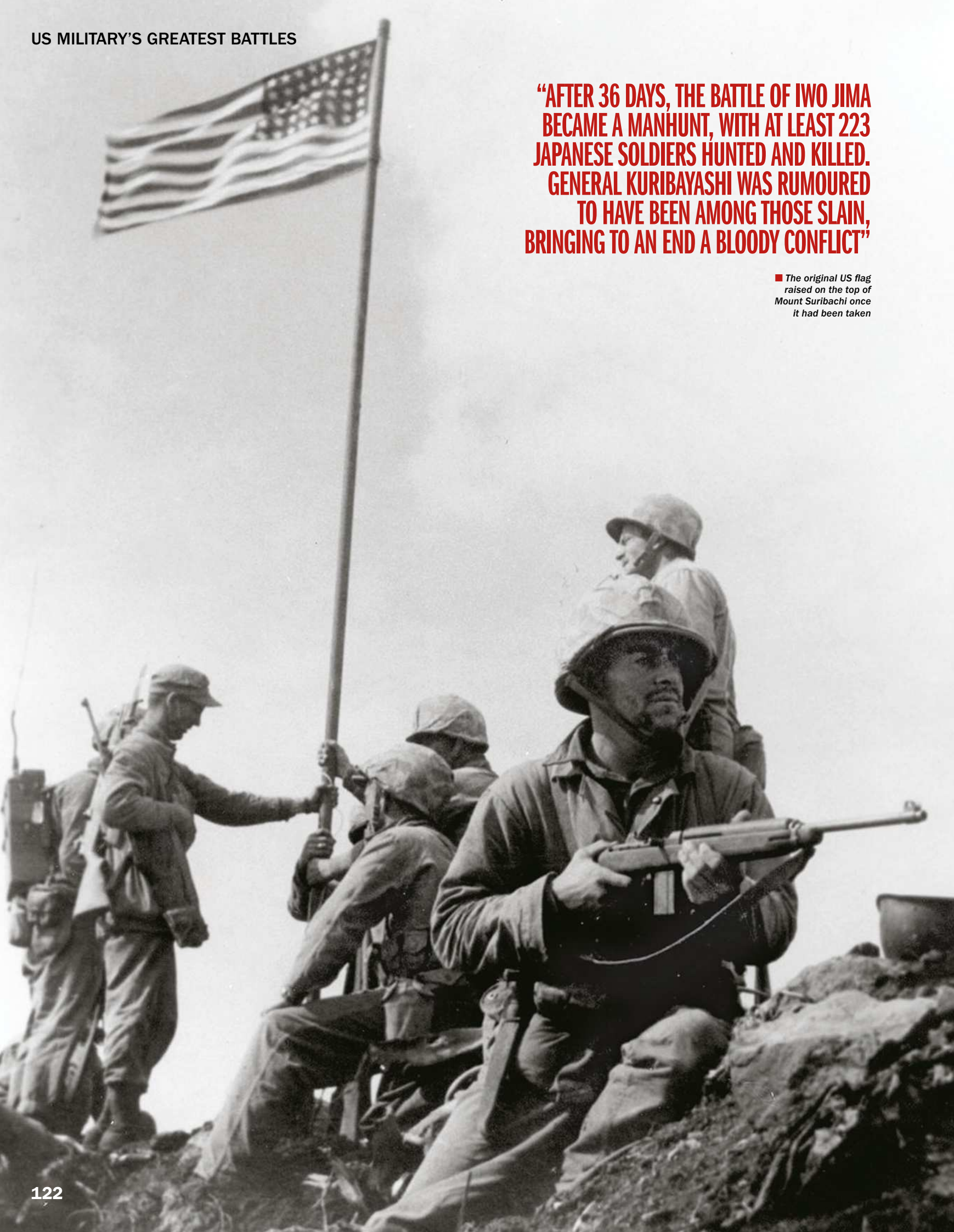
Finding a 300-strong Japanese stronghold just a few hundred yards from the sea, the Fourth Division delays an attack at 7am on 12 March to try and coax the Imperial forces to surrender. However, a problem with the generator-powered loudspeaker sees snipers pick off a number of Marines, provoking the US troops to fight back at 9am with grenades and flamethrowers.

06 VICTORY ON THE HORIZON

With the fighting all but done, the Fifth Division's 28th Regiment find themselves faced with a gorge full of caves and some 500 ill-organised Japanese infantry. Two prisoners of war are used to translate a surrender appeal but, despite returning alive, the US troops are forced to pick off Kuribayashi's remaining troops one by one.

"AFTER 36 DAYS, THE BATTLE OF IWO JIMA BECAME A MANHUNT, WITH AT LEAST 223 JAPANESE SOLDIERS HUNTED AND KILLED. GENERAL KURIBAYASHI WAS RUMOURED TO HAVE BEEN AMONG THOSE SLAIN, BRINGING TO AN END A BLOODY CONFLICT"

■ The original US flag raised on the top of Mount Suribachi once it had been taken



Marines were killed or wounded on 1 March, but the hill's access to Nishi Ridge on the northwest edge of the island was too important to bypass.

While many hills had fallen with relative ease, Hill 382 on the eastern edge of the island was proving a more difficult proposition for the Fourth Division. Honeycombed with Kuribayashi's tunnels, the hill's approach was guarded by hidden tanks, while the crest had been fortified into a huge artillery-proof bunker.

South of the hill was a series of ridges, topped by 'Turkey Knob', while further south of this massive rock was a natural bowl known as the 'Amphitheatre'. The fighting here was bloody, with 1 March the fourth day that the division's Marines had hurled themselves at the Japanese forces. Such was the relentlessness of this quadrant, it became known as the 'meat grinder'. It wasn't until 10 March that the Japanese defenders around 'Turkey Knob' were eliminated. Naval fire, carrier air strikes, heavy shelling and many Marine lives were needed before Hill 382 finally fell into US hands.

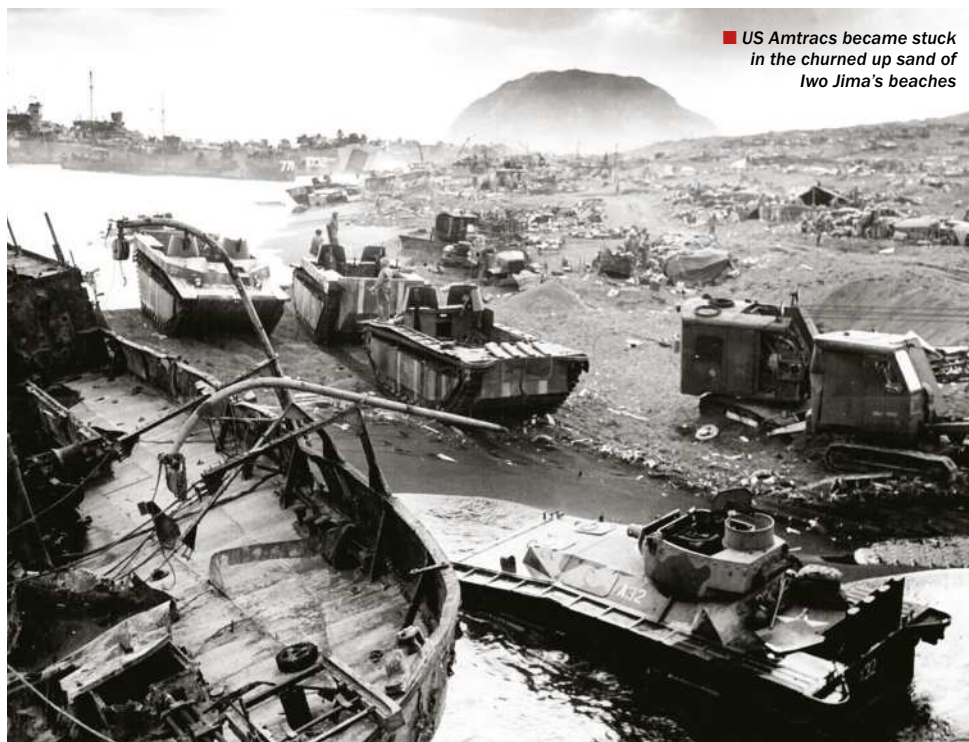
In this time, the Fifth Division's 26th Regiment had succeeded in securing 'Hill 362B' on 3 March, before the Third Division readied itself for the assault on 'Hill 362C' four days later. Under cover of darkness (a departure from the usual US tactics in the Pacific), General Erskine's men advanced beyond the unsuspecting Japanese forces. It was a blow for General Kuribayashi, yet his men remained to resist strongly in their lasting areas of occupation.

Unfortunately for Imperial Japan, their attacks were becoming increasingly uncoordinated, allowing patrols from the 3rd Marine Division to reach the northern coast by 9 March. The following evening, there was only one final pocket of Japanese resistance left in the division's sector, although the tunnels underneath the ground gave many more fanatical infantry a hiding place.

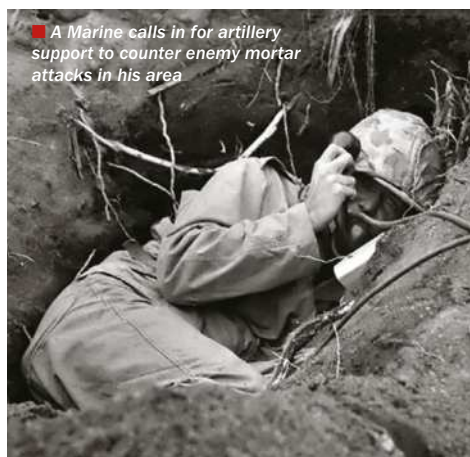
In the eastern sector, home of the Fourth Division, Japanese troops launched a counterattack on 8 March. Under the cover of heavy artillery fire, the men attacked the Marine forces, worming their way through the 23rd and 24th Regiment's lines. Some attacked with the blood-curdling banzai cry, though many chose a stealthier approach, attempting to impersonate wounded US soldiers. Despite the counterattack's ingenuity, it was an ultimately hopeless effort that saw 650 Japanese killed by noon the following day. The end result was that, on 10 March, the Turkey Knob/Amphitheatre salient was completely destroyed as Marine forces pushed Kuribayashi's defences right back to the northern coast.

Clearing up the north

For the remainder of Operation Detachment, each Marine division would be faced with isolated pockets of resistance dotted around Iwo Jima. The Third Division was tasked with the grim job of destroying a heavily fortified resistance southwest of Hill 362C (eventually achieved on 16 March), while the Fourth Division focused on an enemy stronghold between East Boat Basin and Tachiiwa Point.



■ US Amtracs became stuck in the churned up sand of Iwo Jima's beaches



■ A Marine calls in for artillery support to counter enemy mortar attacks in his area



■ A heavy naval bombardment began the US offensive

Across the island, Fifth Division bore down on Japanese forces around Kitano Point, the last point of defence in the Iwo Jima campaign. Joined by two battalions of the Third Division's 21st Regiment, the final Marine drive began on 11 March with naval shelling and airstrikes. The US artillery again had little impact, though, making initial progress painstaking.

Despite being ravaged since the initial landing on 19 February, Fifth Division carved through 1,000 yards between 14-15 March, as many of the Japanese troops met a fiery end at the hands of the Marines' flame-throwing tanks. The following day, the 21st Regiment flanked the Japanese on the right, providing the US forces with two attack fronts to decimate the remaining Imperial forces.

By 25 March, organised enemy resistance was declared over. However, Kuribayashi's men had one final assault up their sleeve. In the vicinity of Motoyama 2, some 300 men assembled that evening. On the morning of the 26 March 1945, they stormed the US camp, killing sleeping Marines at will until a defensive line was formed by the Americans as dawn broke, sending the remaining Japanese

into hiding. After 36 days, the Battle of Iwo Jima became a manhunt, with at least 223 Japanese soldiers hunted and killed. General Kuribayashi was rumoured to have been among those slain, bringing to an end a bloody conflict that saw more than 70,000 Marines deployed.

Of the 20,060 Japanese troops on the island, only 216 were ever captured, with approximately 300 left hiding in the tunnels for the remainder of the war. On the US side, 5,931 Marines were killed, with a further 17,372 injured – it was the only time in the Pacific Theatre that American casualties outnumbered those of the Japanese. General Holland Smith had "thrown human flesh against reinforced concrete" in taking the island of Iwo Jima. Yet in the ensuing aerial war against the Japanese mainland, over 2,200 heavy bombers made unscheduled landings on the island's airstrips, saving 24,761 US airmen from potential disaster.

Iwo Jima was a grim yet inspirational victory for the Americans that demoralised their enemy. Mainland Japan had never seemed closer to the United States. A final victory in the Pacific was in sight.

US MILITARY'S GREATEST BATTLES

■ A US Marine charges
through Japanese machine
gun fire on Okinawa



BATTLE OF OKINAWA

THE LAST CAMPAIGN OF WORLD WAR II IN THE PACIFIC THEATRE REQUIRED AN ARDUOUS 82 DAYS FOR THE ALLIES TO CLAIM VICTORY

OKINAWA, RYUKYU ISLANDS 1 APRIL – 22 JUNE 1945

It was a curious coincidence – Operation Iceberg, the Allied invasion of Okinawa, was scheduled for 1 April 1945, both Easter Sunday and April Fool's Day. Short of an invasion of Japan itself, the island in the Ryukyu archipelago was the last objective of the Allied campaign across the Pacific Ocean during World War II. Only 547 kilometres from the Japanese Home Islands, Okinawa would provide the sternest test of the war for the Marine III Amphibious Corps and the US Army's XXIV Corps, comprising the Tenth Army under Lieutenant General Simon Bolivar Buckner, a veteran army officer and the son of a Confederate general from the American Civil War and the 30th governor of Kentucky.

The invasion date was designated Love-Day (L-Day) to avoid confusion with the 1944 D-Day landings in France. Actually, the Allied build-up was larger than that of D-Day. The US Navy and British Royal Navy brought 1,300 warships and support vessels along with 750,000 tons of supplies to the waters off Okinawa.



Buckner's Tenth Army included more than 180,000 troops. Marine Major General Roy S Geiger led the III Amphibious Corps, including three divisions: the veteran First Marine Division, nicknamed the Old Breed, the Sixth,

and the Second in reserve. Major General John R Hodge commanded the XXIV Army Corps, including four infantry divisions: the Seventh, 77th, 96th and reserve 27th.

The recent carnage on Iwo Jima remained fresh in American minds, and a bloodbath was also expected on Okinawa. During the week before L-Day, navy guns fired 13,000 shells and carrier-based aircraft flew 3,095 missions. The L-Day landings were to hit the Hagushi beaches on Okinawa's southwestern shore. After the anticipated fight to gain a foothold, the Americans intended to advance eastward across the Ishikawa Peninsula, seizing Yontan and Kadena airfields. Splitting the island in two, they would swing north and south, fighting their way to opposite shores, completing the conquest of Okinawa.

Another worrisome aspect of Operation Iceberg was the kamikaze threat to the host of Fifth Fleet ships obliged to remain offshore. Japanese suicide planes were expected to assault these rich targets with vigour.

82 days of fighting on Okinawa and the nearby cluster of small islands also seized yielded an immense harvest of destruction. By the time the island was declared secure on 22 June 1945, American deaths totalled

OPPOSING FORCES	
	
VS	
US	JAPAN
Leader: Major General Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr	Leader: Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima
Infantry: 180,000	Infantry: 110,000
Artillery: 2,000	Artillery: 1,700
Tanks: 350	Tanks: 27
Aircraft: 3,500	Aircraft: 5,000
Ships: 1,300	Ships: 20

“THE CARNAGE ON IWO JIMA REMAINED FRESH IN AMERICAN MINDS, AND A BLOODBATH WAS ALSO EXPECTED ON OKINAWA”

US MILITARY'S GREATEST BATTLES

7,374, while 31,807 were wounded and 239 were missing. The US Navy suffered 4,907 casualties, 120 ships were damaged and 29 sunk. Marines and soldiers earned 23 Medals of Honor, many of them posthumous.

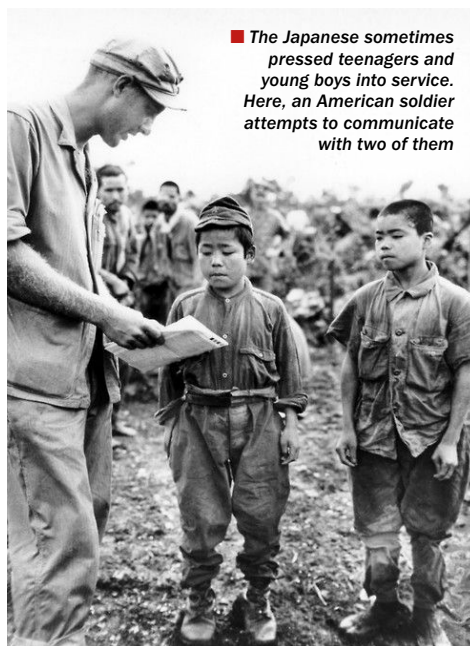
The Japanese garrison, under Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima, commander of the 32nd Army, fielded over 100,000 troops – only 11,000 prisoners surrendered. A total of 2,373 Kamikaze pilots died and thousands of sailors perished in the Imperial Japanese Navy's last substantial offensive action of the war. Many died when the super battleship Yamato sank under a fusillade of bombs and aerial torpedoes. An estimated 150,000 Okinawan civilians lost their lives.

Under a canopy of aircraft and naval bombardment, the invasion rolled forward on the morning of 1 April, landing craft engines stirring white wakes extending 12 kilometres across. Virtually no resistance was encountered. By the end of L-Day, 60,000 American troops occupied a beachhead 4,600 metres deep and 14,000 metres wide. 28 men were dead, 104 wounded and 27 missing.

Ushijima watched the awe-inspiring sight from his command post at Shuri Castle, the ancient abode of the kings who once ruled the Ryukyus, as the Americans put 16,000 troops ashore in an hour. A firm advocate of defence in depth, he conceded the beachhead and airfields to draw the Americans inland, where he would defend the island to the last man. His forces included the Ninth, 24th and 62nd divisions. Independent brigades and artillery, engineer and naval troops were also attached. For the death struggle, the Japanese

constructed three defensive lines across southern Okinawa.

Early progress was swift. In four days, American troops took territory they thought would require three weeks of combat. Both airfields were captured on the first day. By 3 April, the First Marine Division had crossed the Ishikawa Isthmus, captured the Katchin Peninsula and cut Okinawa in half. The airfields were quickly operational. Marine Air Groups 31 and 33 flew in from aircraft carriers, and an Army Air Force fighter wing also arrived.



■ *The Japanese sometimes pressed teenagers and young boys into service. Here, an American soldier attempts to communicate with two of them*

Soon enough, the Marines met stubborn resistance. Five battalions of the Fourth and 29th Marines attacked the 365-metre Mount Yae-Take and 2,000 enemy troops under Colonel Takesiko Udo. The Marines were stonewalled by enemy machine guns and mortars. The 14-inch guns of USS Tennessee barked, and Corsairs of Marine Fighter Squadron 322 (VMF-322) bombed and strafed. The Udo Force was slaughtered while the Marines took 964 casualties clearing the area.

The Seventh and 96th divisions hit the first defensive line on 19 April. The 27th Division was soon committed. Minimal gains could not be held and the attack faltered, meaning that Sherman tanks got separated from supporting infantry while advancing near Kakazu, with enemy guns knocking out 22 of the 30 sent forward. On 23 April, Admiral Chester W Nimitz, commander in chief of the Pacific, arrived and voiced his concerns as kamikaze attacks intensified. Hammering Buckner to energise the offensive, Nimitz snarled that if he was not up to it, "We'll get someone here to move it... I'm losing a ship and a half each day out here."

Nimitz was blunt for a reason – Japanese Operation Ten-Go was unleashing 4,500 kamikazes against the Fifth Fleet, filling the skies with ten mass sorties nicknamed Kikusui, or Floating Chrysanthemums, each including 350 or more aircraft. The sailors of the Fifth Fleet endured, earning the nickname 'the fleet that came to stay'. Two kamikazes ripped into the aircraft carrier USS Bunker Hill on 11 May, its 58th day on station.

US pilots shot down scores of kamikazes. On 22 April, three Marine Corsairs of VMF-



■ *Marines of 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines manoeuvre at Wana Ridge. One fires his Thompson submachine gun; the other carries a Browning automatic rifle*



■ Torpedo bombers and fighters of the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm occupy the flight deck of the carrier HMS Implacable

“GRABBING A THIRD RIFLE AND A CLUTCH OF GRENADES, HANSEN CHARGED FORWARD AGAIN, KILLING EIGHT ENEMY SOLDIERS AND SMASHING A MORTAR POSITION”

323 flamed 16 in 20 minutes. Nevertheless, some suicide planes got through. The stand of the Fifth Fleet (redesignated Third Fleet when Admiral William F ‘Bull’ Halsey relieved Admiral Raymond A Spruance on 27 May) wrote a stirring chapter in US naval history.

After three weeks of fighting, Ushijima pulled the surviving defenders out of the first line, cloaked under steady rain and thick fog. In early May, the Tenth Army was poised to assault the second, or Shuri Line, four divisions abreast across a 8,200-metre front. On 2 May, the First Marine Division assaulted the Awacha Pocket. The Fifth Marines advanced through a downpour but ran into enemy fire from concealed positions. It took a week to clear Awacha.

22-year-old Private Dale M Hansen of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, lost his rifle as it was shattered by an enemy bullet during his single-handed destruction of a Japanese pillbox on 7 May. He picked up another weapon and ran up an adjacent ridge but six Japanese soldiers blocked his path. Hansen shot four – but then his rifle jammed. The two survivors pounced. Hansen swung the rifle’s butt and slipped away. Grabbing a third rifle and a clutch of grenades, Hansen charged forward again, killing eight enemy soldiers and smashing a mortar position. More Marines followed, claiming the ridgeline. Hansen was killed by a sniper four days later. On 30 May 1946, his parents accepted his posthumous Medal of Honor.

The First Battalion, Seventh Marines, reached the top of Dakeshi Ridge twice on 11 May but was forced to retire. A day later, three Sherman tanks – two mounting flamethrowers – charged ahead of the riflemen spitting flame and machine gun bullets and claimed the high ground. The Marines atop Dakeshi Ridge looked southward towards the rocky jumble of Wana Draw and nearby Wana Ridge. The 1st Marine Division flung itself against the outcroppings, cliffs and caves. Progress was measured in yards. Through 19 days of horror, Marine casualties averaged 200 for every 100-yard advance.

Marine and army tanks fired 5,000 75mm shells and 175,000 rounds of .30-calibre ammunition on 16 May alone. The 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines lost a dozen officers in four days. The Seventh Marines took 700 casualties at Dakeshi Ridge and 500 more in five days at Wana Draw.

500 replacements reached the First Marines, which relieved the Seventh, and renewed the attacks on Wana Draw, 365 metres wide at its mouth but narrowing southward towards Shuri Ridge, funnelling Marines into interlocking fields of fire. By 20 May, the Fifth Marines had taken Hill 55 west of Wana Draw, but at the end of the month the First Marine Division was bogged down one ridgeline short of Shuri.

Meanwhile, to the west, the Sixth Marine Division crossed the Asa River on 10 May, advancing 900 metres in 36 hours. By 12 May it had drawn up around a nondescript hill

rising precipitously 70 metres. The riflemen nicknamed it Sugar Loaf.

Sugar Loaf was flanked by two more small hills dubbed Half Moon and Horseshoe. The Marines did not initially realise that the complex was the western command nexus of the Shuri Line. 2,000 Japanese soldiers defended Sugar Loaf and another 3,000 held Half Moon and Horseshoe.

The battle for the Sugar Loaf-Half Moon-Horseshoe triad dragged on for ten harrowing days. Captain Owen G Stebbins of Company G, Second Battalion, 22nd Marines, led his command towards Sugar Loaf. In seconds, two platoons were pinned under a torrent of enemy fire. Stebbins and executive officer Lieutenant Dale W Bair kept the third platoon moving. 28 of the 40 men were quickly killed or wounded.

Stebbins was hit in both of his legs. Bair was shot in the left arm but still he persevered, gathering 25 Marines and charging to Sugar Loaf’s crest, although he was ultimately unable to hold it. Five attempts had come up short. Just 75 of the original 200 Marines in Company G were unscathed.

After dark on 14 May, the 29th Marines reinforced the 22nd Marines. 44 men were marooned on Sugar Loaf’s slope with at least 100 bodies lying around them. Major Henry A Courtney Jr, executive officer of the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Marines, decided that his men could not remain where they were, but withdrawal would invite a hostile response. He reasoned that the best option was to attack, so he roused Marines of Companies F and G and asked for volunteers. Courtney led all 44 Marines again to Sugar Loaf’s crest. They held until after dark, when 15 survivors scrambled down. Courtney died when a mortar fragment slashed his neck. He received a posthumous Medal of Honor.

Corporal James L Day’s seven-man squad from Company F, Second Battalion, 22nd Marines, had followed Courtney up Sugar Loaf. Five men were quickly shot. Day and Private Dale Bertoli were alone on the western slope. For four days and three nights the pair peppered the Japanese with bullets and grenades. In 1984, Major General James L Day would return to take command of Okinawa’s Marine garrison. The 22nd Marines had lost 400 casualties, nearly half its number, in three days.

On 17 May, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 29th Marines, charged Sugar Loaf four times, losing 160 men but holding the hill for several hours before withdrawing at dusk. On 18 May, Company D, Second Battalion, 29th Marines, under Captain Howard L Mabie, assaulted Sugar Loaf while suppressing fire, keeping Japanese heads down on Half Moon and Horseshoe. Mabie’s Marines skirted both flanks, negotiated minefields and emptied their weapons into clusters of Japanese soldiers emerging from bunkers on the reverse slope. Company D’s grip on Sugar Loaf held. The Fourth Marines relieved the 29th, and by 20 May its Third Battalion controlled most of Horseshoe, while the Second held most of Half Moon. The Sixth Marine Division had lost nearly 2,700 casualties fighting for Sugar Loaf.

While the Marines battled in the west, the 96th Division took Conical Hill and the

US MILITARY'S GREATEST BATTLES

Seventh Division was able to secure Yonabaru. Ushijima's flanks were vulnerable and his positions at Shuri Ridge and Shuri Castle were untenable. He finally withdrew to the final line across the Kiyamu Peninsula under a cloak of steady rain and fog.

Foul weather slowed the American advance, yet the Sixth Marine Division's tanks probed the village of Naha on 28 May. The next morning, Company A, First Battalion, Fifth Marines, managed to reach the crest of Shuri Ridge without firing a shot, crossing into the 77th Division zone to occupy the much-coveted Shuri Castle.

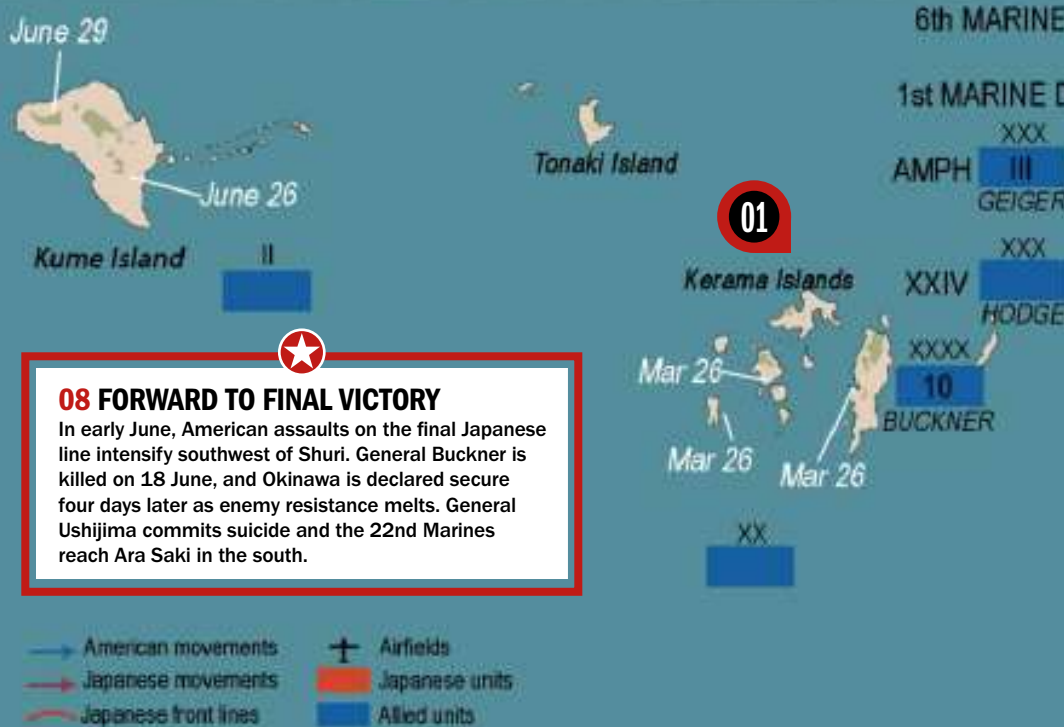
Ushijima's six-kilometre front then stretched across Kunishi Ridge in the west to Hill 89 – the site of his last command post – and to Hill 95. Meanwhile, the 6th Marine Division secured the Oroku Peninsula and Naha Airfield in a joint land and amphibious craft assault, decimating 5,000 Japanese defenders under the command of Rear Admiral Minoru Ota.

The Seventh Division's 32nd Regiment captured Hill 95 on 12 June, while the 17th Regiment took the eastern end of the Yuza Dake escarpment, unhinging Ushijima's right flank. The 96th Division claimed the rest of Yuza Dake the next day, and the First Marine Division concurrently began its assault on the western anchor of the Japanese line. With Colonel Edward Snedeker's Seventh Marines in the lead, initial assaults on Kunishi Ridge on 11 June were repulsed. Snedeker ordered a night attack and two Marine companies reached the crest near sunrise, mowing down surprised Japanese troops who were cooking breakfast and preparing for the day.

For their part, the Japanese mounted some heavy counterattacks. Three attempts to reinforce the Marines atop Kunishi Ridge were thwarted, but the First, Fifth and Seventh Marines slowly made gains. In five days, the last heavily defended ridgeline on Okinawa was finally subdued. On 18 June, the Seventh Marines trudged rearward to be relieved by the Eighth Marines, Second Marine Division.

General Buckner climbed Mezado Ridge to observe the 8th's deployment. Five Japanese artillery shells crashed down, spraying rock and shrapnel – a splinter the size of a dime struck Buckner in the chest. One of the highest-ranking American officers killed in action in World War II, he died in ten minutes. General Roy Geiger handled the Tenth Army for five days in the aftermath of Buckner's untimely death until Army General Joseph Stilwell arrived to take over the command.

Geiger declared Okinawa secure on 22 June, while elements of the 7th Division took Hill 89, and the 77th Division captured Hill 85. That same day, as Seventh Division troops neared the entrance to his headquarters in a cave on Hill 89, General Ushijima committed ritual suicide along with Rear Admiral Ota. The Sixth Marine Division turned south from the Oroku Peninsula, occupying Ara Saki, Okinawa's southernmost point. Company G, Second Battalion, 22nd Marines, raised the Stars and Stripes. The great battle of Okinawa, the climax of the Pacific land campaign, was over. Until that time, suffering on such an immense scale had seemed impossible. The Americans had paid dearly for the island.



08 FORWARD TO FINAL VICTORY

In early June, American assaults on the final Japanese line intensify southwest of Shuri. General Buckner is killed on 18 June, and Okinawa is declared secure four days later as enemy resistance melts. General Ushijima commits suicide and the 22nd Marines reach Ara Saki in the south.

01 SETTING THE STAGE

In late March, American forces capture clusters of small islands surrounding Okinawa to serve as supply bases and anchorages for ships damaged by incessant kamikaze attacks. Famed war correspondent Ernie Pyle is later killed on one of these islands – Ie Shima.

02 STORMING ASHORE

On 1 April 1945, US Marines and Army troops splash across the Hagushi beaches on southwestern Okinawa, while the Second Marine Division creates a diversion at sea. Although a tough battle is expected at the water's edge, the Japanese have withdrawn to the south, and early progress is brisk.

03 CAPTURING KEY AIRFIELDS

Kadena and Yontan airfields, keys to continuing support of the American ground offensive, are captured on the first day. Marine, navy and army aircraft are soon flying combat air patrol, interdiction and ground-support missions from these airfields, facilitating the advance, which nevertheless grows sluggish as enemy resistance intensifies.

04 RAPID RUN NORTHWARD

The Americans bisect Okinawa and then turn north and south. Japanese resistance in the north is sporadic and sacrificial, and many enemy troops are bottled up and annihilated in the Motobu Peninsula. By 13 April, the 22nd Marines have occupied thumb-shaped Hedo Misaki Peninsula at the extreme northern tip of the island.

05 FIRST LINE BREACHED

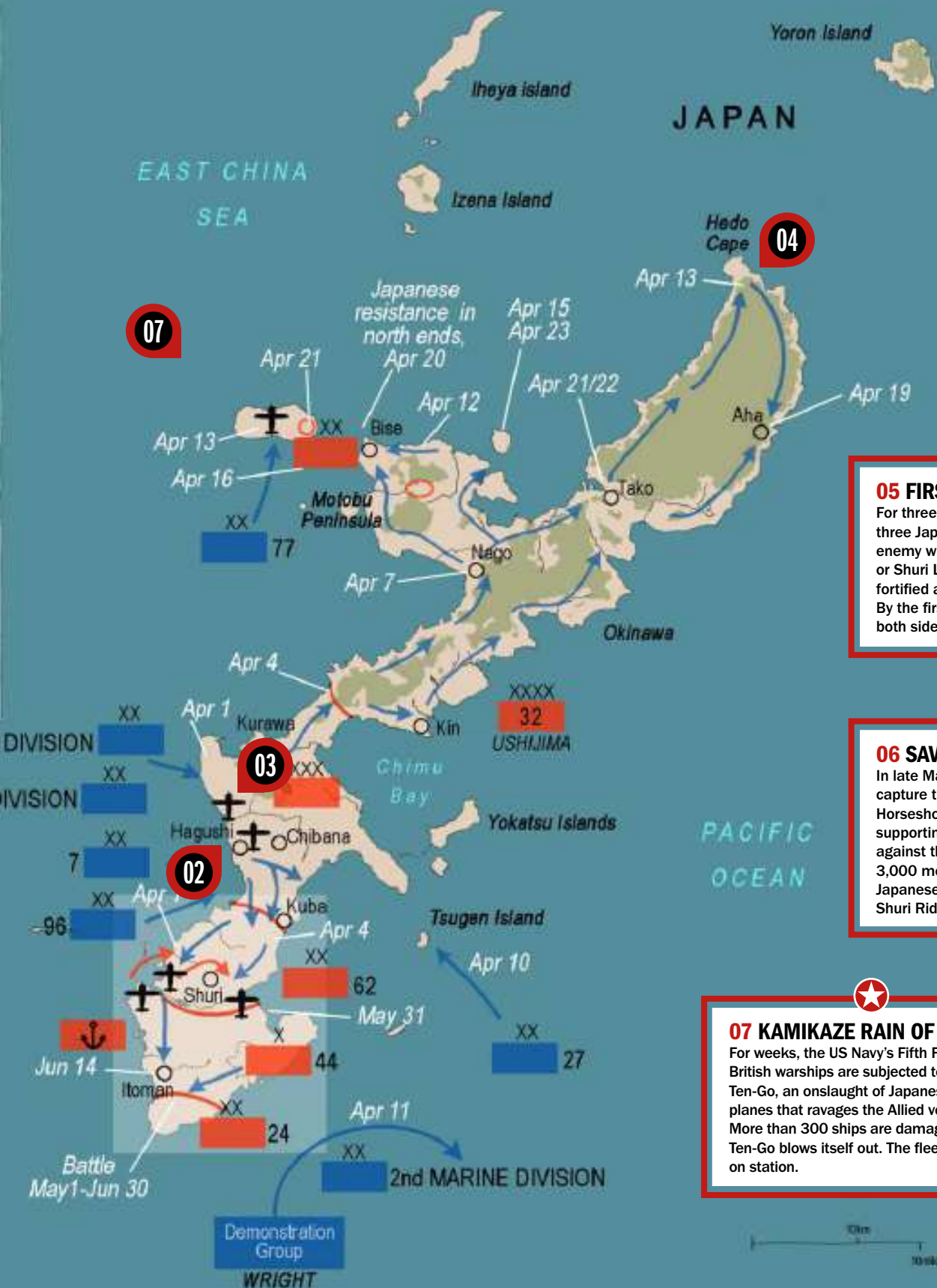
For three weeks, the Americans batter the first of three Japanese defensive lines, finally forcing an enemy withdrawal and proceeding toward the second, or Shuri Line, where determined defenders have fortified a labyrinth of caves, crevices, hills and valleys. By the first week of May casualties begin to mount on both sides.

06 SAVAGERY AT SUGAR LOAF

In late May, American forces finally capture the Sugar Loaf-Half Moon-Horseshoe complex of mutually supporting hills, significant progress against the Shuri Line. After losing nearly 3,000 men, the Americans compel the Japanese to abandon strong positions at Shuri Ridge and Shuri Castle.

07 KAMIKAZE RAIN OF STEEL

For weeks, the US Navy's Fifth Fleet and British warships are subjected to Operation Ten-Go, an onslaught of Japanese suicide planes that ravages the Allied vessels. More than 300 ships are damaged before Ten-Go blows itself out. The fleet remains on station.



BATTLE OF PUSAN PERIMETER

THE DEFENCE OF THE PUSAN PERIMETER AGAINST COMMUNIST FORCES BOUGHT TIME TO TURN THE TIDE OF THE KOREAN WAR

WORDS WILLIAM E WELSH

PUSAN, SOUTH KOREA 4 AUGUST – 18 SEPTEMBER 1950

Without warning, a tidal wave of the North Korean People's Army swept across the 38th parallel on 25 June 1950, invading neighbouring South Korea. Communist forces routed the unprepared South Korean units in their path and swept from victory to victory.

Within three days, the communists, nearly 100,000 strong, had taken the South Korean capital of Seoul. As a result, the United Nations Security Council authorised military assistance to South Korea to eject the invaders. The US Far East Command, under General Douglas MacArthur, took charge of the effort, but the task would be arduous.

While South Korean forces fell back steadily before the onslaught, the nearest available American troops belonged to the Eighth Army in Japan, under the command of General Walton H Walker. Undermanned and without much of its organic equipment due to post-World War II budget cuts and downsizing, the 24th Infantry Division was deployed to the Korean peninsula in early July. By mid-month, the First Cavalry and 25th Infantry Divisions had arrived. The immediate task of the American troops and their South Korean allies was to slow the North Korean advance, buying time for MacArthur to marshal forces to mount a counteroffensive.

As the North Koreans rolled forward, the UN forces fought delaying actions, but the enemy was relentless. Task Force Smith, the first American combat contingent in Korea, was overmatched. Its 500 soldiers were outnumbered ten to one, and they had no tanks. North Korean troops and armour

overwhelmed the Americans. They slashed on to victories at Chuncheon, Chochiwon and the Kum River. By the end of July, the key towns of Taejon and Yongdong had fallen. The North Korean objective was the major South Korean port city of Pusan on the Tsushima Strait and the East China Sea. It was the port of entry for UN reinforcements, equipment and supplies, and it had to be held at all costs.

General Walker had hoped to slow the North Korean onslaught west of the Nakdong River but he was rapidly running out of real estate. By the end of July, he had pulled east of the river. As he established the defensive positions that came to be known as the Pusan Perimeter, Walker issued a stirring statement, later called his "stand or die order".

The general told his command: "We are fighting a battle against time. There will be no more retreating, withdrawal or readjustment of the lines or any other term you choose. There is no line behind us to which we can retreat [...] There will be no Dunkirk; no Bataan. A retreat to Pusan would be one of the greatest butcheries in history. We must fight until the end [...] We will fight as a team. If some of us must die, we will die fighting together [...] I want everybody to understand we are going to hold this line. We are going to win."

The Pusan Perimeter was the last line of defence for South Korea and the UN troops. It encompassed 220 kilometres in the extreme southeastern corner of the peninsula. Walker was forced to defend an area many times larger than his command could adequately cover. Therefore, he determined that the

■ After participating in the capture of a position above the Nakdong River, two US Marines survey the countryside near Pusan

"WITHIN THREE DAYS, THE COMMUNISTS, NEARLY 100,000 STRONG, HAD TAKEN THE SOUTH KOREAN CAPITAL OF SEOUL. AS A RESULT, THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL AUTHORISED MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH KOREA"





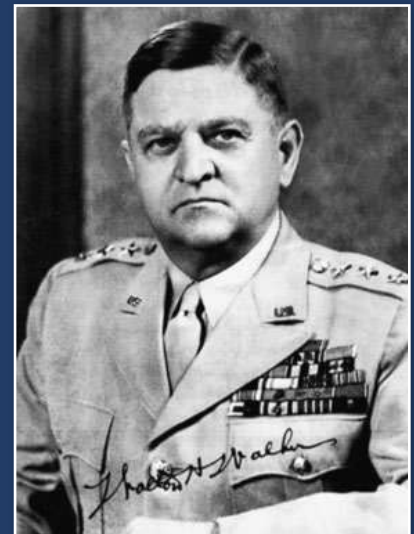
THE DEATH OF GENERAL WALKER

General Walton H Walker, the bulldog tough commander at the Pusan Perimeter, died in an auto accident in December 1950

Pugnacious Lieutenant General Walton H Walker executed a brilliant defensive campaign against the invading North Koreans at the Pusan Perimeter. Due to a lack of immediate command structure, much of the field responsibilities fell to Walker, who maintained contact with his subordinates via light aircraft and his speedy Jeep.

When the crisis had passed and the Eighth Army assumed the offensive, Walker pursued the linkup with X Corps rather than encircling and annihilating the bulk of the North Korean forces dangerously exposed in the south. Despite his superb handling of the Eighth Army during difficult days, some analysts called for his removal. To compound the issues surrounding his command, the Chinese intervention in November 1950 caught Walker – and the rest of the UN leadership – unprepared.

Walker's unquestioned bravery and leadership were recognised with the Distinguished Service Cross, but his removal from field command was a strong probability when tragedy struck. On 23 December 1950, the general was killed when his Jeep collided with a South Korean Army weapons carrier on an icy road. His son, Captain Sam Sims Walker, escorted his body back to the United States for burial at Arlington National Cemetery. Walton Walker was promoted posthumously to the rank of full general.



General Walker commanded the hard-pressed UN forces that held the Pusan Perimeter against repeated North Korean attacks



■ Soldiers of the US 24th Infantry Division prepare to roll forward aboard trucks during the Pusan Perimeter fighting

best course of action would be to utilise the traditional principle of interior lines to the maximum, transferring reserve formations to threatened positions and employing a mobile defensive tactic.

Walker could also rely on the US Air Force's mastery of the skies, interdicting enemy troop movements and logistics around the clock. The US Navy was unchallenged at sea; its air support and gunfire were reliable and on time and target. Pusan was capable of handling thousands of tons of cargo in a month's time, and a well-maintained rail line served the general area from the port to the important towns of Taegu, Miryang, and Pohang-dong.

The imperative for the UN forces was to stand their ground against a daunting force of North Korean troops and tanks flush with victory. Within days of establishing the perimeter, Walker began receiving reinforcements. While the fighting raged, the US Army's Second Infantry Division and Fifth Regimental Combat Team, the First Provisional Marine Brigade, and the British 27th Commonwealth Brigade joined the five depleted South Korean divisions and UN forces already inside the perimeter. The UN numbers eventually swelled to more than 90,000, actually superior to that of the enemy, which had taken heavy casualties and fielded about 70,000 combat troops in more than nine infantry divisions and an armored division.

Throughout the month of August, the North Koreans attacked the Pusan Perimeter, often at multiple points simultaneously. The initial effort was repulsed as six enemy divisions pressed the western flank while others assaulted the northern frontier.

On 5 August, a coordinated attack at four separate points along the UN line sought to outflank Walker's left. He responded with the first UN counterattack of the Korean War. Assembling Task Force Kean, commanded by General William B Kean, he sent the combined Army-Marine unit against the enemy Sixth Division at Chinju on 7 August. Task Force Kean blunted the North Korean thrust and was withdrawn as further offensive operations were expected to produce little.

At the same time, the North Koreans threatened the centre of the UN line with five divisions and tank support. Deftly shifting elements of the US 27th Infantry Regiment and the First Marine Brigade to support the 24th Division, the defenders protected Taegu and the vital rail line. A counterattack on 17 August reduced an area of penetration called the Naktong Bulge.

Perhaps the weakest point in the Pusan Perimeter was its pronounced angle in the northwest where it turned eastward toward the coastline. Heavy North Korean attacks caved in this vulnerable position, and two defending South Korean divisions were pushed back into the operational area of the 1st Cavalry. The UN headquarters was relocated from Taegu to Pusan, but there was little ground to give.

Again, the 27th Regiment was on the move, joining with the First South Korean Division to stabilise the front. General Walker fed more reinforcements into the threatened zone and the defenders occupied high ground that blocked the enemy route of advance. The

AN AIRMAN'S SACRIFICE

Major Louis J Sebille flew support missions above the Pusan Perimeter and died in a heroic act of sacrifice

The air superiority that the US Air Force and Navy established above the Pusan Perimeter contributed mightily to the eventual UN victory. From Fifth Air Force bases in Japan and Korea and the decks of aircraft carriers off the Korean coast, airmen flew countless sorties.

Among the first of the brave American pilots to support ground troops at the Pusan Perimeter was Air Force Major Louis J Sebille. Commanding the 67th Fighter Squadron, on 5 August 1950 he was ordered to lead a flight of three North American P-51 Mustang fighters in a sweep against an enemy troop movement. The aircraft were equipped for tactical support, and in addition to their .50-calibre machine guns each carried two 500-pound (226.8-kilogram) bombs along with rockets.

After spotting an armoured enemy column, Sebille led the ensuing attack. On the first pass, he attempted to drop both bombs, but only one released, rendering the aircraft unstable. Nevertheless, Sebille turned for a second run. As he made a sweeping turn, his plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire. Rather than head towards an emergency landing strip at Taegu, he crashed into the enemy column, killing scores of North Korean troops and destroying many of their vehicles. For his heroic act, Sebille received a posthumous Medal of Honor.



■ Major Sebille stands next to a jet aircraft at a base in Korea. Sebille received the Medal of Honor

fighting lasted a week, and the area came to be known as the Bowling Alley.

Intense North Korean pressure on the northern shoulder of the perimeter nearly succeeded in breaking through the thin defensive line. Tremendous naval gunfire and incessant air attacks supported South Korean troops on the ground as they fell back before enemy spearheads down the coast toward the port of Pusan. The enemy thrust penetrated 40.2 kilometres and reduced the perimeter to about half its earlier territory.

Despite the enemy's punishing blows, the UN forces had managed to hold at Pusan into late August. At the end of the month, however, the enemy launched its last bid for total victory in Korea. Their supply lines stretched to the breaking point, the North Koreans had also absorbed tremendous casualties. Their 105th Armored Division had lost nearly all its vehicles and was down to only a handful of tanks, while replacement troops were not of the fighting quality of those that had been lost.

On 27 August, the North Koreans launched a coordinated attack that compelled the defenders to fight at multiple points at the same time. Determined to defend the lifeline at Pusan, the UN forces fell back from Pohang-dong as the enemy cut the road from Taegu. A critical situation worsened as the Second Infantry Division withdrew toward Yongsan and the 25th Infantry Division line was breached in the enemy's drive toward Masan.

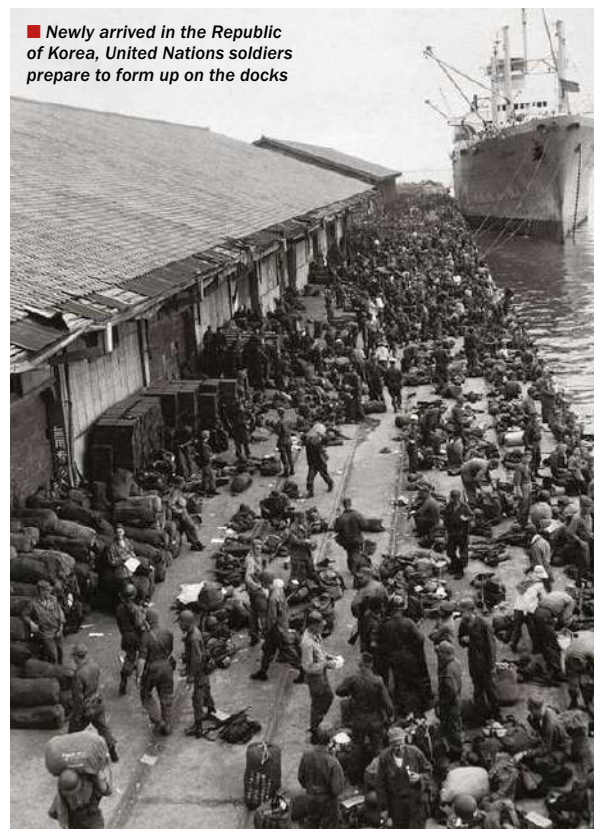
Reserves were again deployed to hotspots, and the determined defense of Pusan began to slow the North Koreans. The Second Infantry Division and First Marine Brigade moved against the Naktong Bulge again, and the 24th Infantry Division moved up to support South

Korean forces in the north. The attackers exhausted themselves on the defensive positions, their ammunition and foodstuffs rapidly depleted, and constant air attacks by the UN forces eroded combat effectiveness. By 12 September, the communist offensive had finally been stalled completely.

Three days later, the counteroffensive that the haggard stalwarts of the Pusan Perimeter had fought for erupted far to the northwest at Inchon, where General MacArthur executed a bold amphibious landing that threatened enemy communications and supply lines while potentially cutting off the North Korean forces deep in South Korean territory.

They had fought for their lives for more than two months, but the breakout from the Pusan Perimeter meant to coincide with the Inchon landings gained momentum as the North Koreans began to withdraw on 22 September. Eighth Army drove northward to link up with the UN X Corps four days later.

The costly Battle of the Pusan Perimeter was over, but the war dragged on for three more years. The butcher's bill was high for both sides. North Korean casualties are estimated at more than 60,000 killed, wounded and captured. The South Koreans suffered up to 40,000 lost, and nearly 4,300 Americans were dead, 12,377 wounded, and 2,500 missing and taken prisoner.



■ Newly arrived in the Republic of Korea, United Nations soldiers prepare to form up on the docks

“THE UN NUMBERS EVENTUALLY SWELLED TO MORE THAN 90,000, ACTUALLY SUPERIOR TO THAT OF THE ENEMY, WHICH HAD TAKEN HEAVY CASUALTIES”



■ American Marines carry a wounded comrade on a stretcher after a firefight with North Korean forces at the Pusan Perimeter

BATTLE OF INCHON

THE CALCULATED RISK OF AN AMPHIBIOUS LANDING AT INCHON TURNED THE TIDE OF THE KOREAN WAR

WORDS MIKE HASKEW

INCHON, SOUTH KOREA 15-19 SEPTEMBER 1950

While the US Eighth Army and other United Nations troops fought for their lives at the Pusan Perimeter, General Douglas MacArthur was finalising the plans for a daring masterstroke to relieve the beleaguered defenders and turn the tide of the Korean War.

Weeks after their surprise invasion of neighbouring South Korea on 25 June 1950, North Korean forces assailed the defences at Pusan, the vital port where UN reinforcements and supplies were offloaded and rushed to the front lines. MacArthur, supreme commander of UN forces in Korea, needed time to plan his counteroffensive, and the brave soldiers of Pusan bought it in blood.

Overcoming objections from numerous staff and senior officers, MacArthur planned an amphibious landing at Inchon in the northwest of the Korean Peninsula, 40 kilometres from the South Korean capital of Seoul. The operation was fraught with risk. Despite the fact that the tides at Inchon varied up to a maximum of 11 metres, only two narrow channels approached the landing beaches and these were likely to be heavily mined. On top of this was the fact that the currents were swift at 5.5 to 14.8 kilometres per hour.

Even so, the element of surprise favoured the attackers. The North Koreans would not expect a landing amid such unfavourable conditions, and MacArthur believed the gamble presented the best opportunity for success.

Eventually, 75,000 troops of the US First Marine Division and the US Army's Seventh Infantry Division took part in the counterstrike, code-named Operation Chromite, on 15 September 1950. Prior to the landings, special forces scouted the beaches at Inchon and the island of Wolmi-do in the harbour. Deceptive airstrikes and manoeuvres were executed at other locations to keep the North Koreans off balance. As D-day approached, the invasion fleet under US Navy Admiral Arthur D Struble moved into position and the UN X Corps, commanded by Major General Edward Almond, made final preparations to splash ashore.

Heavy air and naval bombardments preceded the landings, and at 6:30am the Third Battalion, Fifth Marines, under Lieutenant Colonel Robert Taplett, hit Green Beach on Wolmi-do supported by nine M26 heavy tanks of the First Marine Tank Battalion. By noon the island was secured, with 200 North Koreans killed and 136 taken prisoner. The Marines suffered only 14 casualties.

After waiting several hours for favourable tides, Lieutenant Colonel Raymond L Murray led the Marines' Regimental Combat Team 5 ashore at Red Beach, securing a lodgment that encompassed surrounding high ground and opening the causeway from Wolmi-do to link up with the Third Battalion. Casualties at Red Beach were light as well; only eight Marines were killed and 28 wounded. Further south, the First Marine Regiment, under Lieutenant



■ Red Beach is crowded with reinforcements and equipment on the day after the initial landings at Inchon



■ Marine Lieutenant Baldomero Lopez scales the seawall at Inchon moments before he is killed in action. He received the Medal of Honor

AN AMERICAN ICON

MacArthur remains one of the most divisive commanders in US military history

General Douglas MacArthur's risky Inchon operation paid great dividends. He solicited support and justified the undertaking with a stern statement: "The only alternative to a stroke such as I propose will be the continuation of the savage sacrifice we are making at Pusan, with no hope of relief in sight. Are you content to let our troops stay in that bloody perimeter like beef cattle in the slaughterhouse? Who will take the responsibility for such a tragedy? Certainly, I will not."

Despite his success at Inchon, he failed to recognise the warning signs of Chinese intervention in the Korean War, which cost UN forces dearly. MacArthur openly criticised the "limited war" policies of President Truman, who relieved the general of duty on 11 April 1951. Eight days later, MacArthur addressed a joint session of the US Congress and quoted a line from a timeworn barracks ballad: "Old soldiers never die; they just fade away."

It was the end of a controversial 61-year career for the vain, outspoken MacArthur, which included receiving the Medal of Honor, command of American troops in the South Pacific during World War II, a dramatic return to the Philippine Islands in 1944, and the postwar administration of Japan.



■ MacArthur conceived the risky landing at Inchon that reversed UN fortunes in the Korean War

Colonel Lewis B 'Chesty' Puller, came ashore at Blue Beach to secure the road to the village of Yeongdeungpo and beyond toward Seoul.

On the morning of 16 September, the Americans and attached South Korean troops entered Inchon and cleared the city. The North Koreans had been caught completely off guard. They scrambled to respond but their counterattack was shredded by Vought F4U Corsair fighter-bombers of Marine Fighter Squadron 214 (VMF-214) and a rapid thrust by M26 tanks with Marine infantry support.

The next day, the Marines hammered another attempted counterattack, destroying a force of 200 troops and six Soviet-made T-34 tanks. They also secured the vital Kimp'o airfield without a fight as the North Koreans fled, which allowed Seabees (Construction Battalions) and combat engineers to prepare the base for offensive air operations. On 18 September, the Seventh Infantry Division began landing at Inchon and soon joined the Marines in the battle for Seoul.

Coinciding with an Eighth Army offensive at Pusan, MacArthur's gamble at Inchon was a resounding success. Their lines of supply and communications severed, the North Koreans were compelled to retreat. The withdrawal became a rout, and an estimated 35,000 enemy soldiers were killed or captured. In contrast, the victory at Inchon had cost UN forces 566 killed and 2,713 wounded.

UN forces continued their offensive, crossing the 38th parallel into North Korea and capturing Pyongyang on 19 October. The advance proceeded toward the Yalu River, the North Korean border with China. The unexpected intervention of Chinese ground troops in November led to a UN withdrawal and stalemate. The armistice that ended the fighting was not signed until June 1953.



■ Heavily armed US Marines prepare to offer covering fire

THE TET OFFENSIVE

IN EARLY 1968, COMMUNIST GUERRILLA FORCES THROUGHOUT SOUTH VIETNAM LAUNCHED AN OFFENSIVE THAT WOULD GRAVELY UNDERMINE AMERICAN WARTIME STRATEGY

WORDS MIKE HASKEW

SOUTH VIETNAM 30 JANUARY – 23 SEPTEMBER 1968

The Lunar New Year, or Tet, was a major holiday all across Vietnam, North and South, even in times of war. Bitter enemies, the communist regime of North Vietnam and its Việt Công insurgent allies and the US-backed administration in the South had agreed for years to an informal ceasefire during the Tet observance.

On 30 January 1968, all of that changed. As families gathered to celebrate the holiday, the Việt Công launched attacks in major cities across South Vietnam, taking both the US military and the South Vietnamese Army by surprise. Violence initially erupted in 13 cities throughout central South Vietnam and the next day spread like a brushfire to more than 100 towns and villages. For a time, chaos reigned.

North Vietnamese General Võ Nguyên Giáp conceived the so-called Tet Offensive to destabilise the military and political situation in the South. He hoped that the attacks would foment a general uprising against the corrupt government of President Nguyễn Văn Thiệu.



■ Viet Cong guerrillas pose with AK-47 assault rifles and, curiously, American radios prior to a mission

Giáp's larger aim was to demonstrate to the American people that the Vietnam War was nowhere near conclusion; the Việt Cộng could strike at any time or place. Giáp knew that the support of the American public for the war was beginning to wane, and a brutal, successful offensive might compel President Lyndon B Johnson to decrease the US military presence in Vietnam or withdraw altogether.

As the Tet Offensive progressed, Giáp failed in the first objective, but soon enough his other ambitious goal came to pass. Ultimately, the offensive was a costly military failure for the Việt Cộng and the North Vietnamese Army that resulted in more than 175,000 casualties. Still, the reports that had been emanating from the US Army's propaganda machine were proven overly optimistic – if not deliberately deceptive – in asserting that victory was at hand. The credibility of the American military establishment was destroyed in the offensive, which lasted roughly nine months.

President Johnson refused a subsequent request for 200,000 additional combat troops from General William Westmoreland, commander of American forces in Vietnam, while scaling back the areas American bombers would hit to territory south of the 20th parallel and suggesting peace talks. American casualty lists grew, and the Tet Offensive claimed more than 50,000 American, South Vietnamese and allied casualties by September. Johnson's realisation that public opinion had turned against the Vietnam War influenced his decision not to seek reelection to the presidency in November 1968. After Tet, the US strategy in Vietnam centred on getting out, an achievement that his successor Richard Nixon described euphemistically as "peace with honour".

The Tet Offensive was preceded by a communist siege of the US forward base at Khe Sanh and other locations in Vietnam's Central Highlands in the autumn of 1967. The siege lasted more than five months but the American garrison held out. However, the struggle at Khe Sanh preoccupied US and South Vietnamese strategists. They failed to respond to other Communist movements that signalled the Tet operation.

In the early phase of Tet, the communist onslaught was ferocious. Americans were

shocked to see televised images of the bodies of Việt Cộng infiltrators shot dead in the US embassy compound in Saigon during evening news broadcasts. They recoiled from images of atrocities committed on both sides.

The most vicious fighting occurred in the provincial capital of Hue in central Vietnam. Nestled along the Perfume River, this ancient capital was ravaged by over a month of fighting. On 30 January, the communists swept into Hue and rounded up those they suspected of sympathising with the Americans and South Vietnamese. Members of the intelligentsia and ordinary citizens were summarily executed. At least 2,800 civilians were murdered.

When the US Marines went into Hue, they found the communists ensconced within its old citadel. American tanks and aircraft attacked incessantly, but the Communists held on doggedly. The citadel was virtually destroyed and 216 Americans died before the insurgents were subdued. North Vietnamese and Việt Cộng casualties topped 5,000.

Amid the televised images of desperate combat, and with the prospect of victory in the near future evaporating and faith in their own government eroding, the American people grew increasingly disenchanted with the Vietnam War. CBS News anchor Walter Cronkite, known as the most trusted man in America, took to the airwaves and expressed his concern that the conflict would drag on interminably. A strategic victory for the communist forces, Tet was the turning point for America in Vietnam.



■ A pair of US Marines fire at enemy positions during operations to dislodge Việt Cộng insurgents from the citadel of Hue

ENEMY AT THE EMBASSY

Việt Cộng insurgents gained entry to the US embassy grounds in Saigon and fought a pitched battle with American troops

The most shocking moments of the Tet Offensive occurred in the predawn hours of 31 January 1968, when 19 Việt Cộng guerrillas in two vehicles stopped beside the US embassy compound in Saigon. The main building, the six-storey chancery, had been completed four months earlier after the compound was relocated following a car bombing that killed 20 people in 1965.

The guerrillas blasted a hole in the compound wall just large enough for a man to crawl through, but the explosion alerted two guards. As they raised the alarm, the guards came under fire. They killed the two guerrilla leaders as they tried to crawl through the hole. Seconds later, both guards were shot in the back by two State Department employees who were actually Việt Cộng insurgents. The guards were among five Americans killed that morning.

Việt Cộng rockets and automatic weapons rocked the chancery but the insurgents failed to gain entry. A detachment of US Marines roared through the front gate, trapping them behind six concrete planters in the courtyard. The fighting was over and the embassy grounds secured by 9am, but the shock of the attack would reverberate worldwide.



■ The body of a Việt Cộng insurgent lies in the large planter on the US embassy grounds

GREAT CITADEL

The outer wall of the 18th-century citadel was nine metres high and six metres thick. It offered superb fighting positions for communist troops. In the first three days of the battle, the Marines refrained from using naval gunfire, airstrikes and long-range artillery support to limit damage to the citadel.

TANK CANNON

The M48A3 90mm main gun was the only ground-combat weapons system the Marines fielded in the first phase of the battle that was not matched by the NVA. It was used to blast communist strongpoints and bunkers established among buildings and residences in both sections of the city. The tanks drew heavy fire from the enemy throughout the urban battle, resulting in high casualties among tank crews.

ARMOUR-INFANTRY TEAMS

Tanks spearheaded the advance through rubble-strewn streets with flak-vested infantry fire teams crouching behind them for cover. South Vietnamese troops and US Marines had to painstakingly retake Hue one block at a time. The Marines used tanks and recoilless rifles to blast holes in concrete buildings through which infantry teams could make their assaults.

BATTLE OF HUE

THE BLOODY FIGHT FOR CITY WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE END FOR AMERICA'S INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM

WORDS WILLIAM E WELSH

NORTHERN SOUTH VIETNAM 31 JANUARY – 24 FEBRUARY 1968

The dark clouds, steady drizzle and boarded-up buildings heightened the sense of foreboding as the US Marines of Corporal Glenn Lucas' point squad approached the Thuong Tu Gate to the Hue Citadel. As they drew closer, they were struck by a hailstorm of fire from soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) in concealed positions along the fortress wall and inside the gate. Half of the men in the squad were knocked to the ground. The Marines returned fire with machine guns. Commander Captain Charles Meadows received permission to abort the mission from Lieutenant Colonel Marcus Gravel, but it would take the Marines two hours to safely pull back to the Nguyen Hoang Bridge.

Earlier that afternoon, Gravel had been ordered to lead two companies of Marines across the only remaining intact bridge over the Perfume River that divided the city into northern and southern parts. Their objective



NVA BUNKERS

Communist troops transformed concrete-walled buildings and homes into strongholds with crew-served weapons, such as mortars, machine guns and recoilless rifles. Communist snipers chiselled through the concrete to craft expertly concealed firing positions.



MARINE ASSAULT RIFLE

The select-fire M16 5.56mm rifle used a 20-round magazine. It was made of steel, aluminium alloy and composite plastics that made it light in comparison to its heavier predecessor, the M-14. As a result, each infantryman was able to carry more ammunition.

was to link up with the beleaguered personnel from the Army of the Republic of South Vietnam (ARVN) First Infantry Division headquarters, trapped in the north-east corner. The following day, ARVN relief forces reached their fellow soldiers in the citadel from the north. It would be more than ten days before the Marines returned to the citadel.

The communist offensive occurred on the Vietnamese New Year holiday, Tet, to give them the element of surprise when they struck Hue, the third largest city. Aware of the overwhelming strength of the US military forces, the communists knew they would only be able to hold Hue for a short amount of time, but because it was the historical heart and soul of South Vietnam, the attack had great propaganda value.

In the early hours of 31 January, the Sixth Regiment of the NVA captured the citadel on the north bank of the Perfume River, and

the Fourth Regiment seized the south side. Despite their impressive whirlwind attack, the communists made several key mistakes on the first day. They not only failed to overrun the ARVN headquarters unit and the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) compound, but they also failed to seal off Route 1 so that US Marine forces at Phu Bai Combat Base 13 kilometres away could not quickly reach the south side.

The ARVN and US Marine Corps forces began counterattacking from their respective perimeters on 4 February. On 11 February, at

the request of the South Vietnamese, the First Battalion, Fifth Marines, deployed by boat and helicopter to the northern end of the citadel to assist ARVN forces in clearing the last enemy troops from the citadel.

As the battle drew to a close, ARVN forces retook the Imperial Palace and replaced the Việt Công banner on the main flagpole with the South Vietnamese flag. After the battle, the mass graves of 2,800 civilians executed by the Việt Công during the occupation were discovered. For the South Vietnamese, Hue was a dark chapter in a long war.

“AWARE OF THE OVERWHELMING STRENGTH OF THE US MILITARY, THE COMMUNISTS KNEW THEY WOULD ONLY BE ABLE TO HOLD HUE FOR A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME”



NVA-VC ARMY

NVA FORCES:
4 BATTALIONS

VC FORCES:
6 BATTALIONS



GENERAL VO NGUYEN GIAP LEADER

The defence minister created the Tet Offensive in hopes of inciting an uprising in South Vietnam.

Strengths Struck cultural centre of Hue with overwhelming strength.

Weakness Mistakenly believed that NVA commanders were as skilled as the US commanders.



NORTH VIETNAMESE REGULARS

KEY UNIT

They were well supplied early on in the battle because sympathisers had stockpiled food and ammunition.

Strengths High morale and a willingness to die fighting for their cause.

Weakness Suffered from deprivation and diseases like malaria.



RPG-2 KEY WEAPON

The hand-held, rocket-propelled grenade launcher gave NVA and VC soldiers the ability to knock out enemy armoured vehicles and strongpoints.

Strengths Rugged and very easy to operate.

Weakness Only accurate at short distances.

02 ATTACK ON THE SOUTH SIDE

The 804th NVA Battalion supported by Viet Cong militia simultaneously strikes the newer, triangular-shaped residential portion of Hue south of the Perfume River also under cover of darkness on the morning of 31 January. The communists attack the local headquarters of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam, where 200 US technical personnel defend their compound against attacks by communist troops armed with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades, machine guns and automatic rifles.

01 NIGHT ASSAULT ON THE CITADEL

At 3.30am on 31 January 1968, three battalions of North Vietnamese soldiers storm into the citadel from the north and west through three gates. Their objectives are the Tay Loc Airfield and the Mang Ca compound, which houses the headquarters of the 1st South Vietnamese Division. To support the surprise attack, 122mm rockets scream down on targets throughout the city. By the end of the first day, the communists will control 60 per cent of the citadel.

01

09

08

07

06

03 CONVOY AMBUSH

A company of Marines from Phu Bai Combat Base heads towards Hue in trucks in a response to request for support from the MACV compound. On the way, they link up with four M48 tanks. As the convoy approaches Hue, it is pinned down on the southern outskirts of the city by heavy fire from North Vietnamese regulars. A fresh company of Marines is sent to reinforce the beleaguered company. The 300 Marines won't reach the compound until the afternoon.

04 FIREFIGHT AT NGUYEN HOANG BRIDGE

Company G of the Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, receives orders in the late afternoon of the first day to cross an intact bridge over the Perfume River and link up with the South Vietnamese surrounded by communist forces. The bridge is too light to support the tanks, so they furnish covering power from the south bank. During a two-hour firefight, the hard-fighting Marines cross the river, but fierce enemy fire drives them back. Of 150 Marines engaged, one-third are casualties.



US ARVN ARMY

ARVN FORCES:
11 BATTALIONS

US FORCES:
3 MARINE BATTALIONS
+ 3 US ARMY
BATTALIONS



BRIGADIER GENERAL FOSTER C LAHUE, USMC LEADER

The assistant commander of the 1st Marine Division.

Strengths Pressed the attack despite stifling rules of engagement.

Weakness Underestimated the enemy threat and fed reinforcements piecemeal.



US MARINES KEY UNIT

The US Marines helped defend against a communist insurgency.

Strengths They excelled at offensive operations.

Weakness Hampered by rules of engagement that initially prohibited artillery and air support in an effort to spare civilians.



M48A3 PATTON TANK KEY WEAPON

Spearheaded attacks through the city protecting infantry squads.

Strengths Capable of knocking out strongpoints with its 90mm cannon.

Weakness Unable to operate on some narrow streets inside the citadel and vulnerable to RPGs.

10 RECAPTURE OF THE EMPEROR'S PALACE

ARVN Black Panther rangers clear the Imperial Palace of communist troops. On 24 February, the rangers replace the Viet Cong flag that has flown at the main gate for 25 days with the South Vietnamese flag.

09 MARINES TO THE RESCUE

The First Battalion, Fifth Marines, arrives in the citadel on 11 February to clear the eastern half of the sprawling fortress. One of the most daunting tasks they face is clearing the enemy from the archway tower in the northeastern wall.

08 FIGHTING IN THE CITADEL

Elite South Vietnamese troops go toe-to-toe with the North Vietnamese regulars inside the citadel in early February. When the South Vietnamese capture the northwest wall of the citadel on 4 February, the North Vietnamese launch a successful counterattack.

07 AIR CAVALRY BLOCKING ATTACK

Soldiers of the 3rd Brigade of the US Army's First Air Cavalry Division land west of Hue on 3 February with orders to cut the communist supply line to depots running west from Hue to the Ho Chi Minh Trail. They become entangled in heavy combat with entrenched communist forces.

06 MARINE COUNTERATTACK IN SOUTH HUE

A force of 1,000 US Marines fights block by block to clear the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong from the south side of the city. The Marines are supported by M48 tanks, trucks armed with quad .50 machine guns and a low-silhouette tracked vehicle called an Ontos with a turret supporting two arms, each of which holds three recoilless rifles. Although the Marines clear Hue's south side of large-scale communist forces by 10 February, they continue to conduct sweeps against snipers.

05 SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES RALLY

Brigadier General Ngo Quang Truong requests help from units of the First Division of the ARVN near Hue on behalf of the beleaguered divisional headquarters inside the citadel. All of the units responding suffer heavy losses fighting their way through enemy forces in an effort to reach the headquarters. Once they arrive, they recapture Tay Loc Airfield.

THE REAL BLACK HAWK DOWN

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED THAT FATEFUL DAY?

WORDS LEIGH NEVILLE

MOGADISHU, SOMALIA 3 OCTOBER 1993

A single word began one of the most controversial and bloody battles involving United States special operations forces: "Irene". It was a hot and humid Sunday afternoon in Mogadishu, Somalia, now almost a quarter of a century ago, and as the code word for launch was transmitted across the secure radio frequencies of Task Force Ranger, their heavily loaded helicopters lifted laboriously into the air, their noses pointed towards the sprawling city.

On board the Little Bird and Black Hawk helicopters was an assault force of more than 60 elite Ranger light infantrymen from the First and Second Platoons of the Third Battalion of the 75th Ranger Regiment from Fort Benning, Georgia. Their brother Rangers in Third Platoon were at that moment mounting up in nine, lightly armoured HMMWVs and three five-ton trucks preparing to drive out into the city to extract the assault force.

Alongside the Rangers were the battle-hardened operators of C Squadron, First Special Forces Operational Detachment – Delta, or

Delta Force – although its members referred to it as simply ‘the Unit’. The Delta operators were superbly trained and experienced veterans that took the young Rangers, most of who were in their early 20s, under their collective wing. The Rangers in turn looked up to the operators, with their swagger and custom weapons and gear, with something akin to awe.

The Rangers and Delta operators of Task Force Ranger were targeting the leadership of Somali warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid’s Habr Gidr, one of Somalia’s most powerful clans. Aidid also controlled the Somali National Alliance (SNA), a brutal militia that counted at least 1,000 armed members in the nation’s capital. Aidid and the SNA had been involved in hijacking United Nations aid shipments meant to help alleviate the famine that was racking the country.

After the UN tried to impound the SNA’s heavy weapons, including its technicals (pick-up trucks mounting machine guns and recoilless rifles), the SNA struck back, ambushing Pakistani peace-keepers and killing four

Americans with a command-detonated mine. As the situation descended into open warfare between the Somali militias and the UN, the American ambassador and the commander of American forces deployed with the UN requested special operations assistance to capture Aidid and dismantle his organisation. The request was passed by Defense Secretary Les Aspin to the Special Operations Command, known as SOCOM.

SOCOM looked to one of its sub-commands, the secretive Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) for options. JSOC had been established in the wake of the disaster at Desert One in Iran to command all military special operations units with counter-terrorism responsibilities. For Somalia, JSOC responded with three force options named somewhat incongruously after famous cars.

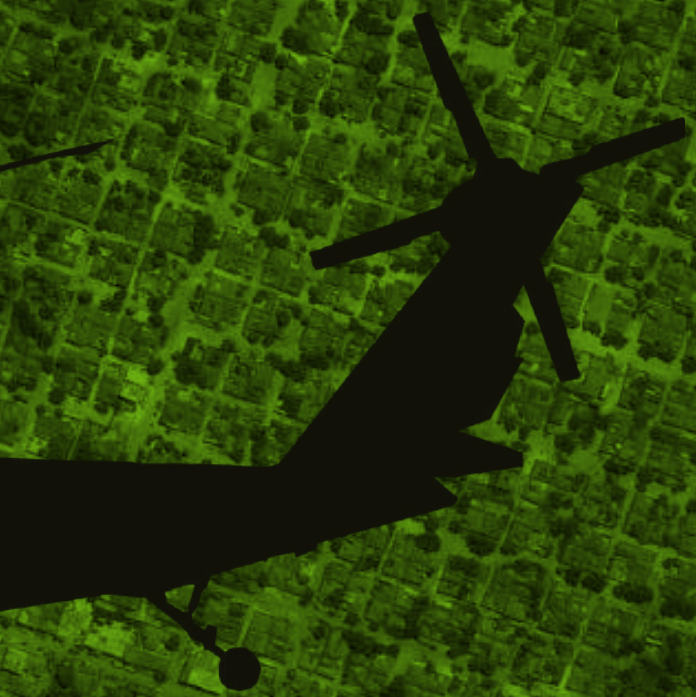
The smallest of these was the ‘Volkswagen’ option, which included a Ranger company of about 120 men, a 60-man Delta squadron and supporting helicopters from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR),

the famed ‘Nightstalkers’. Next up in size was ‘Oldsmobile’, which added more Rangers and helicopters. Finally came the ‘Cadillac’ option, which included a flight of AC-130 Spectre gunships. In an effort to apparently limit America’s footprint, Aspin selected the Volkswagen option.

The manhunt begins

Task Force Ranger deployed to Somalia in August 1993, basing themselves in a rat-infested hanger at the decrepit Mogadishu Airport. Under the command of the highly respected Texan-born Major General William ‘Bill’ Garrison, a former Delta Force commander and then head of JSOC, the Task Force would use a network of informers and surveillance equipment to locate their quarry.

As they developed intelligence on the locations of the SNA leadership, the Task Force began their manhunt. Their first mission, a pre-dawn raid on a suspected SNA compound, ended in media scrutiny as their detainees were revealed to be local UN aid workers. Later



COLONEL THOMAS DITOMASSO

Meet the man who inspired the movie

Colonel DiTomasso served in the army for 20 years, leading soldiers in combat and training. His assignments included the 10th Mountain Division, First Infantry Division and the Third Ranger Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment where he earned the Silver Star and Purple Heart as a member of Task Force Ranger in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993. Some of his exploits were later depicted in the movie *Black Hawk Down*. In 1998, he was selected and assigned to the United States Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg.

He has taken part in multiple combat deployments to Somalia, Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq. During his last assignment, DiTomasso served as a Joint Special Operations Task Force commander in Iraq responsible for more than 1,200 special operations forces and government agency personnel. Selected for promotion to colonel, he holds a master's degree in Military Studies and is currently the owner of Leaders and Training LLC; a network of seasoned professionals and leaders, where he provides leadership training and operational consulting.

■ Lieutenant Thomas DiTomasso in the Task Force Ranger hanger at Mogadishu Airport with his radio operator



■ The crew of Super Six Four pictured a month before the battle

missions were more fruitful, however, and the Task Force began to seriously restrict the "freedom of movement" of the SNA leadership by capturing key figures in the organisation. Aidid himself went into hiding.

To keep the enemy guessing, the Task Force altered their mission profiles – sometimes launching at night, sometimes during daylight. They also altered their infiltration and exfiltration methods – helicopters would be used to insert the assault force on one mission while trucks would be used on the next.

After six missions hunting the SNA leadership, the Task Force received intelligence from their informers that a gathering of high-ranking SNA lieutenants was planned. On Sunday 3 October, the Task Force would launch their seventh, and final, mission.

Plan of attack

Once the targets were confirmed at the meeting, the helicopter assault force would launch on the Irene go-code. In the lead would be the AH-6 Little Birds, gunships known as 'Killer Eggs' or 'Six Guns' carrying 7.62mm miniguns and unguided 2.75-inch rockets. They would overfly the target, searching for any militia on the rooftops that could pose a threat to the Task Force.

Once the AH-6s gave the all clear, in would swoop four MH-6 Little Birds, the troop-carrying variant, with Delta operators perched on fold-down bench seats. These would land directly outside the target building as would two MH-60L Black Hawks bearing more Delta operators. The operators would jump off, breach into the target building and secure their

targets. Finally, the Rangers in their own Black Hawks would arrive.

Veteran of the battle Tom DiTomasso – former ranger lieutenant now lieutenant colonel (retired) – recalls: "The initial assault came in with four Little Birds and two Black Hawks who brought in the primary assault force... then, probably 20 seconds later, you have the four Black Hawks come in at all four corners of the intersection near simultaneously to drop off the blocking positions."

Those blocking positions would be manned by the Rangers of First and Second Platoons, split into four Chalks of between a dozen and 15 soldiers (the term Chalk refers to the number pencilled or stencilled onto the side of an aircraft to allow soldiers to identify their ride). Each Chalk of Rangers would be deployed at a corner of the intersections surrounding the target building.

"Their job was to contain the enemy from running away from the target area and to isolate the target area from external influences – two different things: keep people in and keep people out," DiTomasso adds.

While all of this was occurring, the Rangers of Third Platoon in the ground convoy of HMMWVs and trucks would arrive nearby and await the signal to move forward and collect both the men who had been taken prisoner and the assault force. This ground convoy was commanded by the Ranger Battalion commander himself, Colonel Danny McKnight.

Once Delta had the prisoners secured, they would be swiftly loaded into McKnight's vehicles, the blocking positions would be collapsed, the Rangers would climb into the

OPPOSING FORCES



VS



SOMALI NATIONAL ALLIANCE

Militia: 1,000+
Armed Civilians:
Unknown

TASK FORCE RANGER

Infantry: 100
Rangers, Delta
operators, Air Force
Special Tactics and
SEALs

Helicopters:

8 x MH-60 Black
Hawks, 4 x MH-6
Little Birds
4 x AH-6 Little Birds

"WE WERE GETTING READY TO LEAVE – I GET THE WORD 'PREPARE FOR EXFIL' RIGHT WHEN THE BIRD GOT SHOT DOWN"



■ US troops broadcast messages on the streets of Kismayo, Somalia

trucks and they would head for home. The total mission time was estimated to be between 30 and 40 minutes.

Launch

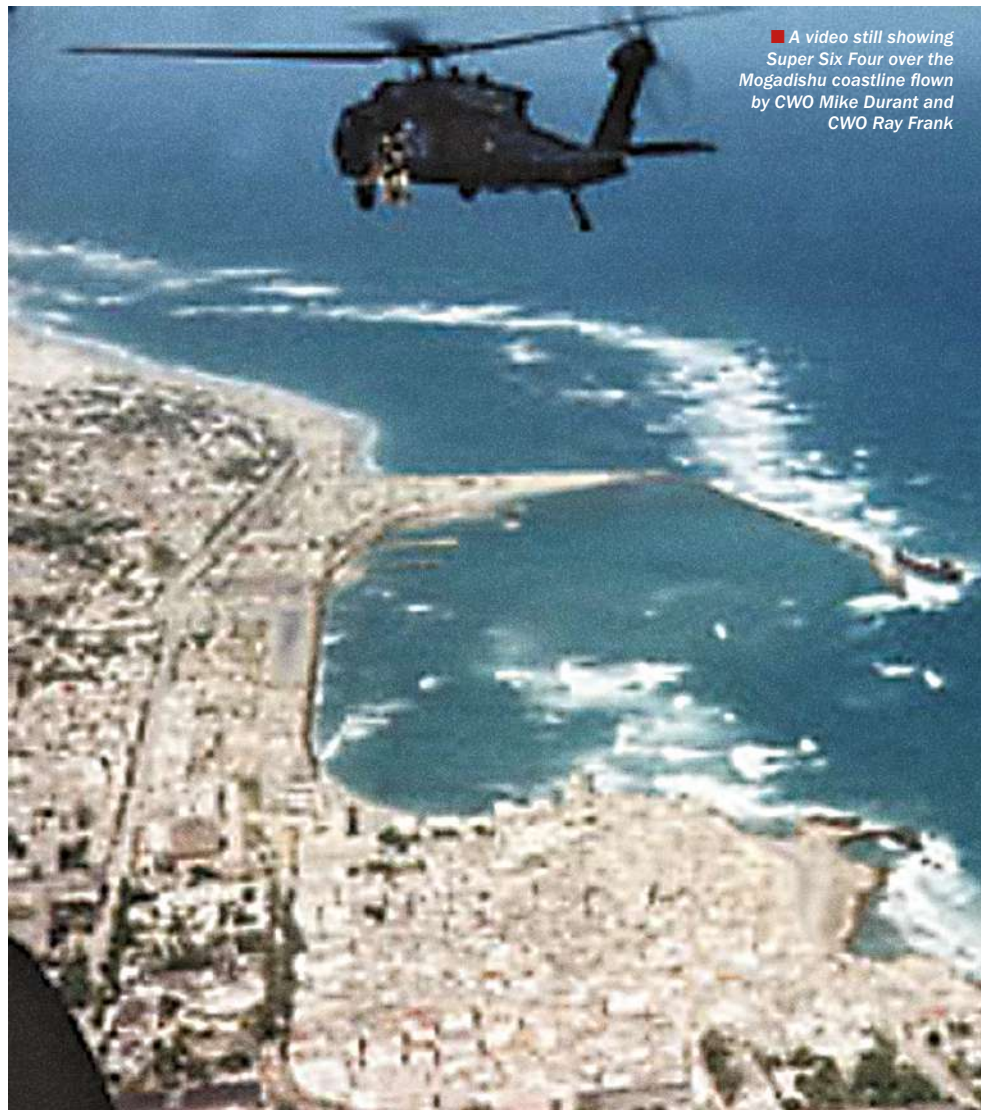
At 3.32 that afternoon, the first helicopters lifted off from the Task Force base and headed towards the city. Flight time was only three to four minutes but already they could see the militias setting fire to stacks of tires as a warning that the Americans were coming. The AH-6s cleared the landing zones and in swept the MH-6s, their rotor wash causing an immediate and all-consuming dust cloud known as a 'brownout'.

Seconds later, Black Hawks Super Six One and Two had landed their operators and were going into orbit over the objective. Each carried a small team of Delta snipers that were to provide observation and precision fire support from the air. For heavier suppressive fire, the helicopter crew chiefs manned miniguns on each aircraft.

The Black Hawks themselves were also something of a weapon – they too produced a fearsome brownout that could be used to non-lethally deter civilian mobs. "It's very uncomfortable to stand under helicopter rotor wash if you don't have any eye protection," DiTomaso explains.

Next in were the Ranger Black Hawks: "As we were fast roping in, I could hear rounds going off, I could hear explosions... We were a good half a block away from the target building and there was no shooting going on at the target building, all of the shooting was occurring outside at the blocking positions."

As the Rangers established their blocking positions to defend the target building, disaster struck. A Ranger, Private Todd Blackburn, fell from the fast rope, plummeting a dozen metres to the ground. The Rangers had suffered their



■ A video still showing Super Six Four over the Mogadishu coastline flown by CWO Mike Durant and CWO Ray Frank

US MILITARY'S GREATEST BATTLES

first casualty. However, this was something that they had trained and planned for.

"When Blackburn fell, I bubbled out (detached) four of my men so we could make visual contact with Eversmann," DiTomasso recalls. "He and I waved to each other, they were evacuating Blackburn, and everything was good to go. They brought the vehicles forward and they put him in a HMMWV and made it back to the airfield." Small arms fire was increasing around their positions, however, and the smoke trails of RPGs criss-crossed the sky.

Super Six One

While Blackburn was evacuated, DiTomasso's Rangers came under fire. "A bunch of drivers and bodyguards (for the captured SNA leaders) were throwing hand grenades over a wall from a garage. Me and all my guys went into the garage to fight those guys and that's when Sergeant Joe Thomas, my forward observer, was talking to Super Six One when they got shot down."

Super Six One had been struck by an RPG and crash landed into a tiny alleyway several blocks east of the target building. The helicopter's nose smashed into a building and crushed the cockpit, killing the pilots. One of the Delta snipers onboard, Staff Sergeant Dan Busch, managed to crawl out and, though wounded, attempted to hold back the mob.

"[Thomas] was bringing them in to observe a large crowd that was building to the north of our position. When the bird got hit and spiralled down and crashed, the crowd saw it too and began running toward the bird. I split Chalk 2 in half and took seven with me to the crash site and eight stayed to man the blocking position," remembers DiTomasso.

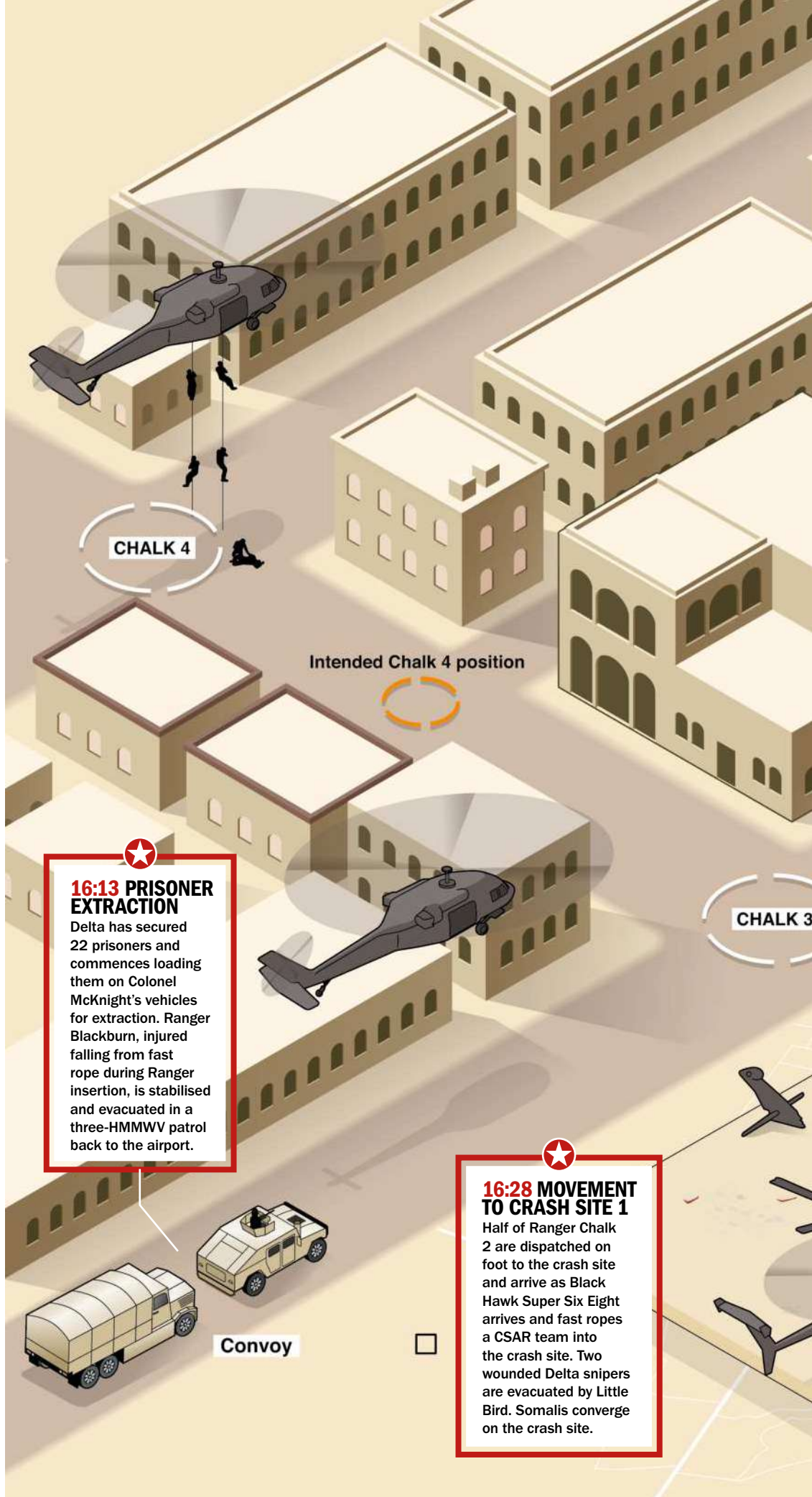
Up to that point, it had all been going as planned: "We assaulted a three-storey building and captured 22 people in less than two minutes with not a single shot fired within [that] building. We'd captured the two lieutenants that we went after that day. We were getting ready to leave – I get the word 'prepare for exfil' right when the bird got shot down."

Securing the crash site

DiTomasso led his half of Chalk 2 to the crash site, receiving and returning fire all the way. "When we got to the crash site, a Little Bird had landed and extracted the two (wounded) snipers. When I came around the corner, I could see [one of the pilots] carrying (Delta sniper) Dan Busch and put him on that Little Bird and then the Little Bird took off." Busch sadly died on the helicopter despite the crew's courageous efforts.

"When that Little Bird took off, we ran underneath it and one of the crew chiefs (from Super Six One) was standing in the middle of the street with his hands over his face and his face was all bloody and the Somalis were beating him with sticks. We pushed all of the Somalis off that guy, grabbed on to him and we moved him to the crash site.

"The other crew chief was sitting against a wall and it appeared he had a back injury. Somalis were running all over the helicopter. The two pilots were still inside the helicopter and (pilot) Cliff Wolcott was trapped. We pulled Donovan Briley (Wolcott's co-pilot) out. Initially



15:42 INITIAL ASSAULT

Four MH-6 Little Birds land in the streets surrounding the target building after AH-6s confirm no hostiles visible. Super Six One and Two insert their Delta assaulters and go into an orbit over the target to provide "airborne security and surveillance". Rangers secure blocking positions.

05:42 THE MOGADISHU MILE

Task Force Ranger recovers the body of Super Six-One's pilot, destroys the helicopter and withdraws in UN vehicles. Some Rangers are forced to withdraw on foot after vehicles leave them behind. Ranger HMMWVs eventually link up and transport the last survivors back to the Pakistani-held soccer stadium.

16:41 SUPER SIX FOUR DOWNED

A second helicopter, Black Hawk Super Six Four, is shot down by an RPG. The aircraft crash lands in a shanty town to the south of the target building with crew surviving impact. A ground convoy attempts to head to the second crash site but it suffers constant ambushes on the way.

16:54 DEFENSE OF CRASH SITE 1

Ranger Chalks converge on the first crash site and, reinforced by Delta operators, defend the crash site all night while the CSAR attempts to extract the body of Wolcott from Super Six One. AH-6s keep back militias. UN and 10th Mountain rescue convoy arrive at 02:27.

16:44 SHUGHART AND GORDON

Delta sniper Shughart and Gordon are inserted at the second crash site as a ground convoy cannot break through. They protect the crew and valiantly defend the crash site against hundreds of Somalis until they run low on ammunition and are killed. Both receive the Medal of Honor posthumously.

16:20 SUPER SIX ONE HIT

Black Hawk Super Six One, vectored in to deter growing crowds of armed civilians and militia around the target building, is struck by an RPG and crashes into an alleyway several blocks away. Both pilots are killed upon impact but crew chiefs and Delta snipers survive the crash.

CHALK 2

CHALK 1

Pakistani Stadium

AREA OF DETAIL

Second Blackhawk Crash site

MOGADISHU

U.S. Army Headquarters ↓

NORTH ↑

INDIAN OCEAN

we were just fighting the Somalis, trying to get them off the helicopter.” DiTomaso then instructed the other half of Chalk 2 to link up with them at the crash site as quickly as they could.

Search and rescue

Moments later, the Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) Black Hawk, Super Six Eight, came thundering in overhead. The CSAR helicopter was equipped for just such a contingency with a 15-man mixed team of Rangers, Delta operators and Air Force Para Rescue Jumpers, or PJs – highly trained combat medics.

“It was a horrifying and pleasant surprise,” remembers. “I knew that the CSAR element was up there in Super Six Eight but I didn’t know they were coming. At the time we were distracted by all of the enemy combatants and I was standing on the corner right near the bird and all of a sudden I couldn’t breathe – literally could not take a breath. I thought I was going to pass out.

“Four guys [fell] out of the CSAR helicopter, as they fast roped down the ropes – they were getting shot and falling down right in front of me. So now you have these 15 plus the 15 that were there and you have the two pilots deceased, the two crew chiefs who were wounded, and four more wounded from the

“IT SEEMED LIKE EVERYBODY HAD A GUN... THERE WERE CHILDREN AND WOMEN RUNNING AROUND THE CRASH SITE CARRYING AKS”

CSAR element.” The helicopter itself, Super Six Eight, was struck by an RPG as it hovered to deliver the CSAR team. It limped back to base and crash landed.

Crowds of Somalis – some SNA militia, some armed civilians – surged continuously against the thin line of Rangers manning the perimeter. “It seemed like everybody had a gun... there were children and women running around the crash site carrying AKs, there were women running around with baskets of RPG rounds.”

The Ranger Company commander, Captain Mike Steele, began to move the remainder of the Rangers to the crash site. They ran into resistance and began taking casualties, including 21-year-old Ranger Corporal Jamie Smith who unfortunately suffered a fatal gunshot wound that severed his femoral artery. “Chalks 1 and 3 and the rest of the

assault force [had] made that move north and Jamie Smith got hit and that whole foot patrol stopped. It was like hitting a wall of lead because the crowds to your north at the crash site were shooting through the crash site and it was like grazing fire further down the road,” DiTomaso explained.

“When that happened, Captain Steele and the Rangers all occupied the buildings on the right side of the road, the east side, and the Delta Troop got on the left side and cleared from building to building all the way up and came abreast of the crash site. Now we had all those guys at the crash site as well.”

Only hope

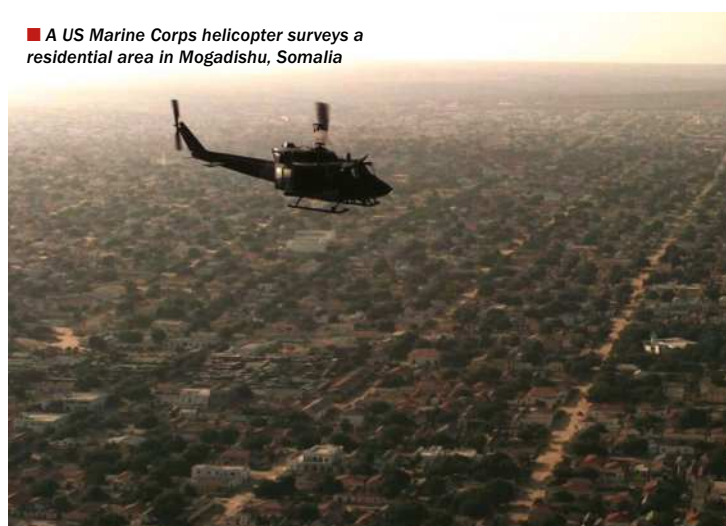
A bad situation was about to become much worse. Black Hawk Super Six Four was struck by an RPG round and crashed to the south of the first crash site.

“I was under the first Black Hawk trying to defend it when I heard on the radio that another Black Hawk had been shot down. Initially we thought ‘okay, we’re going to go secure it’ but we still had Cliff Wolcott trapped in the helicopter [and] we didn’t have enough men to secure the crash site.

“So Super Six Two calls up on the radio to General Garrison and requests permission to put their three Delta snipers into the crash site



■ US infantry in Somalia as part of Operation Restore Hope, 1992



■ A US Marine Corps helicopter surveys a residential area in Mogadishu, Somalia



■ Civilians gather around the crash site of one of the Black Hawk helicopters

to defend it. Three times they called. Three times permission [was] denied. The last time they call, Master Sergeant Gary Gordon, the Delta team leader, got on the radio and called General Garrison and said 'sir, you've got to put us in.' General Garrison said 'Gary, do you know what you're asking for?' and Gary Gordon said 'yes sir, we are their only hope.'

"Shughart and Gordon jump off that bird with an M4, a modified M14 and two .45-calibre pistols. They make their way 300 metres through the neighbourhood and find the helicopter. They pulled everyone out of the Black Hawk, they put them under cover and they defend that helicopter until they run out of ammunition and are overrun by the enemy. The crowd overwhelms the crash site, they kill everybody, they grab (the pilot) Durant – he's the last one they found. An elder steps forward and says 'let's keep this one alive for negotiations' and Durant is held for 11 days as a prisoner of war."

McKnight's convoy had eventually been forced to return to base with mounting casualties and with vehicles literally being shot out from under them. At every turn they had encountered another roadblock or Somali ambush. Without GPS and with directions having to be relayed over the radio from the air, the convoy had little chance of making it to



A Somali man collects pieces of debris from a downed Black Hawk



either crash site. Once back at base, McKnight wasted no time preparing to go back out into the city.

"The convoy with all of the prisoners in the HMMWVs and five-ton trucks went back to the airfield and dropped [them all] off. They loaded up all the headquarters personnel because they needed more Rangers. Those guys then kept on trying to come back out to us.

"All afternoon and into the evening we kept hearing them making contact with the enemy. They made several attempts plus they were trying to get to Durant's crash site but they just couldn't get to it because they didn't have armoured vehicles."

The long night

The Rangers and Delta operators at the first crash site secured the perimeter and prepared for a long night. "We pulled all the casualties in, put them in the centre of the building and defended that building. We split the defence with a Delta captain – he took the northern side, I took the southern side. He had all of the CSAR guys with the special equipment so he continued to work on Cliff (Wolcott) at the helicopter. My job was to run the casualty collection point and secure the perimeter."

The Somalis continued their assault all night. The Little Birds flew continuously – eventually firing some 170,000 rounds from their miniguns and 77 2.75-inch rockets in an astounding 14 hours of combat flying.

"My forward observer was talking to the aerial fires assets, which were the AH-6s at that time and continually calling fire missions to keep the Somali gunmen off of us. They just kept attacking – if they had better command and control, if they were better organised, they might have been able to overwhelm us at that point as we were running out of ammo. They just kept attacking in threes and fours and running at the building and climbing in through the windows."

Back at the Task Force Ranger base, negotiations with the UN continued and were able to gain access to a number of Malaysian and Pakistani armoured vehicles in order to stage a relief convoy with the American Tenth Mountain Division, who were in Somalia to support humanitarian operations. Finally, at 11.23pm that night, the convoy, led by Pakistani tanks, headed toward the city and Task Force Ranger.

DiTomasso and his men could hear them advancing. "I could hear the gunfire. Literally I could hear the .50-calibre machine guns and the 40mm grenades going off. I could hear them in the distance, and then they would stop and then they'd get further away, and then they'd get closer... The ground convoy was trying to break through."

A little more than two hours later, the UN armoured convoy arrived and the men of Tenth Mountain linked up with Task Force Ranger. At dawn, the CSAR team finally managed to release the body of pilot Cliff Wolcott from the wreckage of the Black Hawk. "When Chalk 2 left the crash site at five o'clock, the Somalis started to re-attack so the commander made the decision that we will abandon the helicopter and destroy it with thermite grenades and demolition charges."

Mogadishu Mile

"We moved from the crash site to link up with the Malaysians and Pakistanis. Captain Steele put Chalk 2 at the rear of the foot movement [although] we were the most wounded. When Chalk 2 got to the link-up point, all the vehicles were gone. The crowd kept coming so we just kept running," explains DiTomaso.

"Larry Moores, the platoon leader for 3rd Platoon, was at the Pakistani stadium looking for me. When the guys rolled in with the Malaysians and Pakistanis, Larry's saying 'where's Chalk 2?' So he took his guys, loaded them back up in their HMMWVs and drove back into the city. Basically, he saw us running down the road, he stopped, did a U-turn, we jumped on his HMMWVs and they took us to the Pakistani stadium. It was an immense feeling of sorrow, that's the best way I can describe it. It was not celebration."

Tactical success, strategic failure

18 American soldiers were killed during Operation Gothic Serpent, while 84 were wounded, some with life-altering injuries. One Malaysian was killed and seven wounded during the relief effort. Conservative estimates of Somali dead and wounded indicate more than 1,000. Five Black Hawk helicopters came under fire, three only making it to safety by luck and superb piloting.

DiTomaso is clear that he feels that Task Force Ranger succeeded in their objectives that day. "As hard as it is to say, this was a tactical success. We were never overrun, we stayed there as long as we had to [to] remove Cliff out of the helicopter and then we left and that's that." But he reserves some criticism for what could be termed strategic failings by the Clinton administration.

"We released all the prisoners we had captured, we released them all. On 2 October, the mission was important enough to the United States to have Task Force Ranger there. On 3 October, all of a sudden it wasn't that important anymore and they pulled us all out." Task Force Ranger was stood down, and even though a fresh contingent of Rangers and Delta operators were briefly sent to Somalia, the Task Force would never conduct another mission.

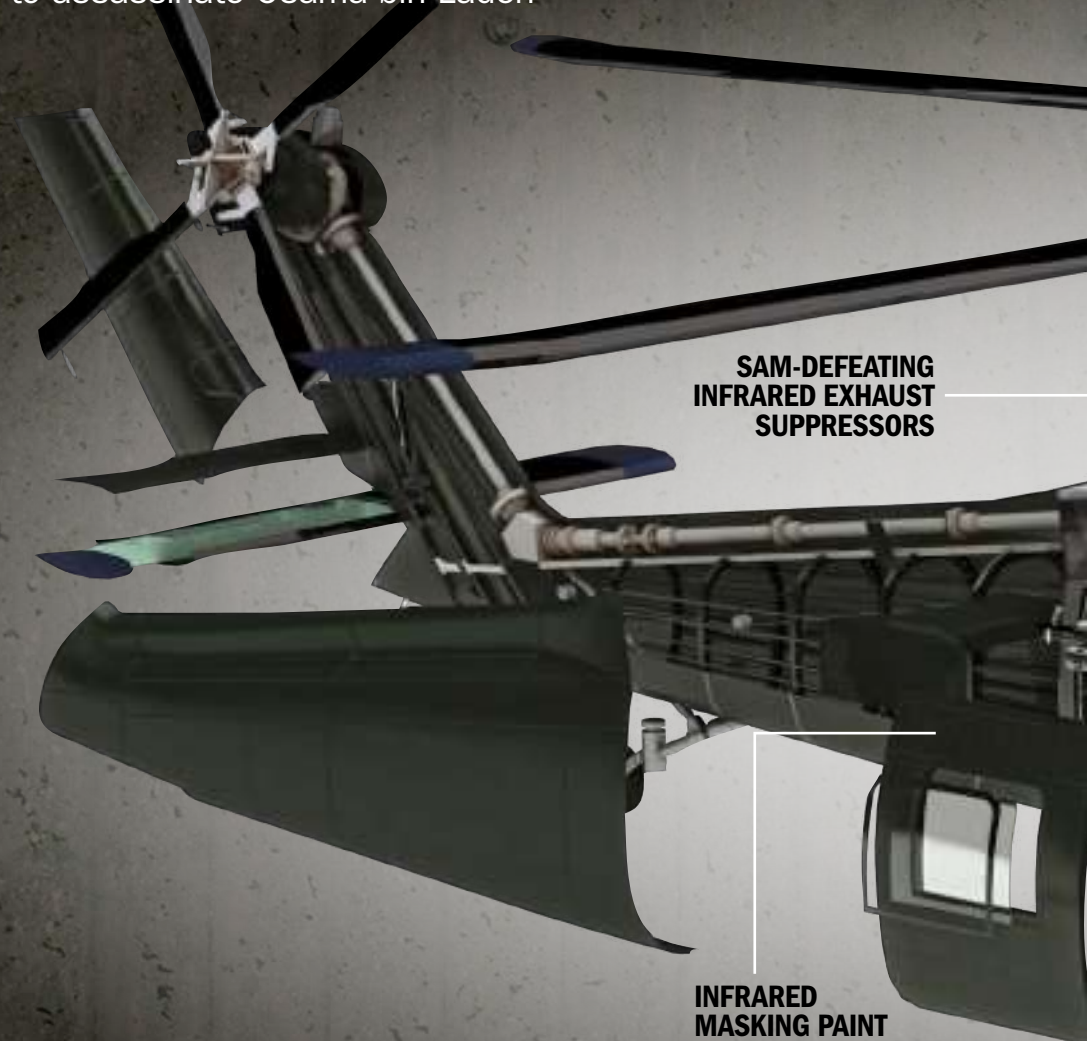
"The mission was a success in that we captured the two SNA lieutenants we were after. It came at great losses. The enemy got lucky that day."

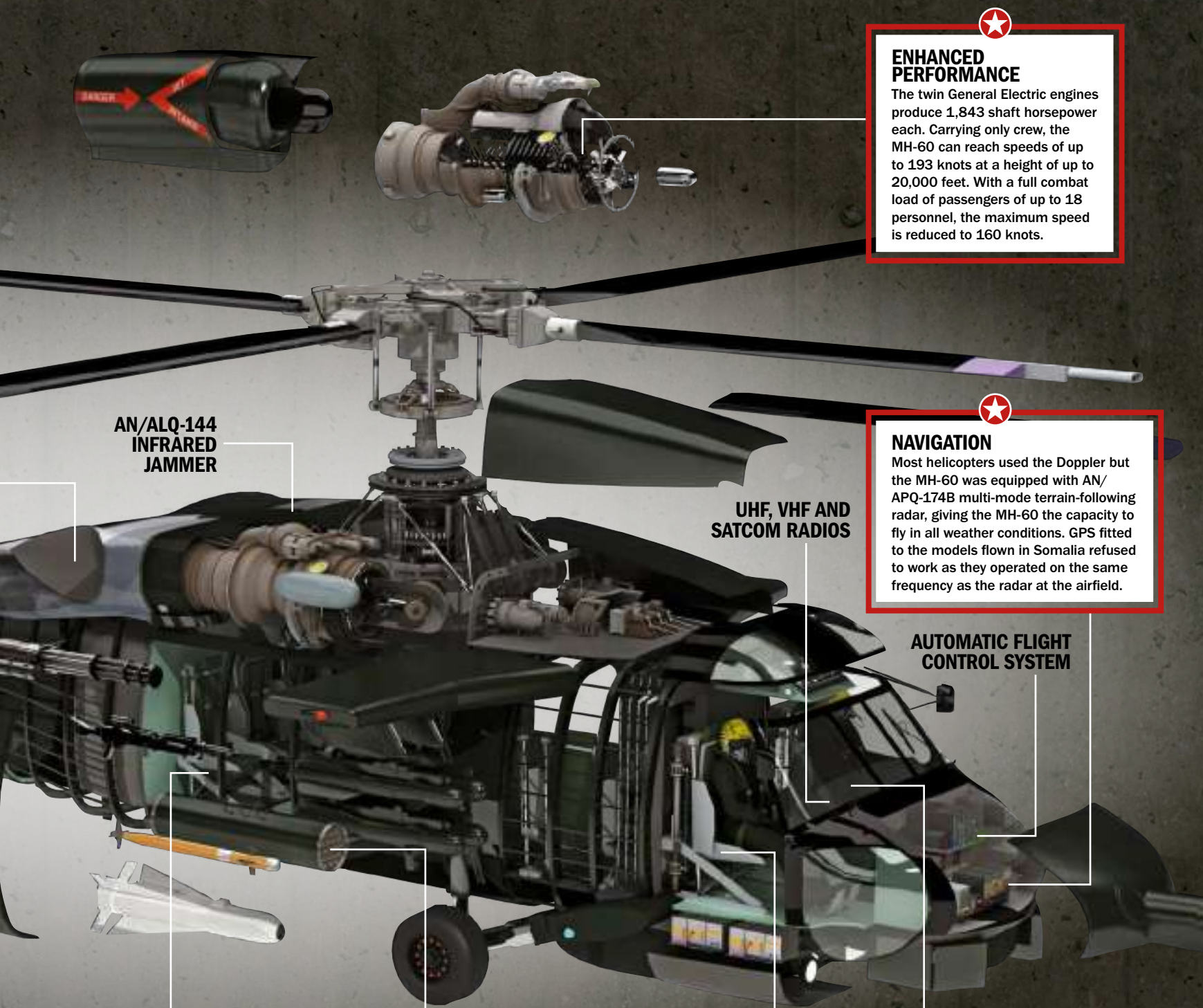
Thanks to Lieutenant Colonel Thomas DiTomaso for his assistance in the preparation of this article

"BASICALLY, HE SAW US RUNNING DOWN THE ROAD, HE STOPPED, DID A U-TURN, WE JUMPED ON HIS HMMWVS AND THEY TOOK US TO THE PAKISTANI STADIUM"

MH-60 BLACK HAWK

The MH-60 is the special operations version of the standard UH-60 Black Hawk. A number of variants exist including the Direct Action Penetrator armed with 30mm cannon and Hellfire missiles and the MH-X Silent Hawk that crashed during the operation to assassinate Osama bin Laden





ENHANCED PERFORMANCE

The twin General Electric engines produce 1,843 shaft horsepower each. Carrying only crew, the MH-60 can reach speeds of up to 193 knots at a height of up to 20,000 feet. With a full combat load of passengers of up to 18 personnel, the maximum speed is reduced to 160 knots.



NAVIGATION

Most helicopters used the Doppler but the MH-60 was equipped with AN/APQ-174B multi-mode terrain-following radar, giving the MH-60 the capacity to fly in all weather conditions. GPS fitted to the models flown in Somalia refused to work as they operated on the same frequency as the radar at the airfield.

AN/ALQ-144
INFRARED
JAMMER

UHF, VHF AND
SATCOM RADIOS

AUTOMATIC FLIGHT
CONTROL SYSTEM



EXTENDED RANGE

The MH-60 has a range of 440 nautical miles. A dismountable probe allows the MH-60L to be refuelled mid-air. The MH-60Ls deployed to Mogadishu took along their aerial refuelling kits but due to their short-range missions never needed them. It can also be configured with internal fuel bladders to extend range.



FIREPOWER

The MH-60 is equipped with two 7.62x51mm General Electric M136 miniguns. These six-barrel machine guns fire an astounding 4,000 rounds a minute. Being electrically powered, the miniguns on the crashed Super Six One and Super Six Four couldn't be used to defend the crash sites. Current models feature auxiliary battery power.



SURVIVABILITY

Although not armoured like the Apache, the body and landing gear of the MH-60 were designed specifically to enhance crash survivability. The fuel tank is self-sealing and both the hydraulics and electrical systems have back-up systems that will keep the helicopter in the air. The pilots' seats are designed to absorb crash impact.



NIGHT VISION

The MH-60 was fitted with the AN/AAQ-16B Forward Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) video camera pod that generates an infrared image of the terrain. Nightstalker pilots are trained to fly in complete darkness with the aircraft's specially designed night-vision-compatible cockpit using night-vision goggles and the FLIR camera.

MILITARY ACTION SINCE 2000

FROM INVASIONS AND LIBERATIONS TO DRONE STRIKES AND ASSASSINATIONS, ARMED FORCES CONTINUE TO PROTECT US INTERESTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

WORDS SCOTT REEVES

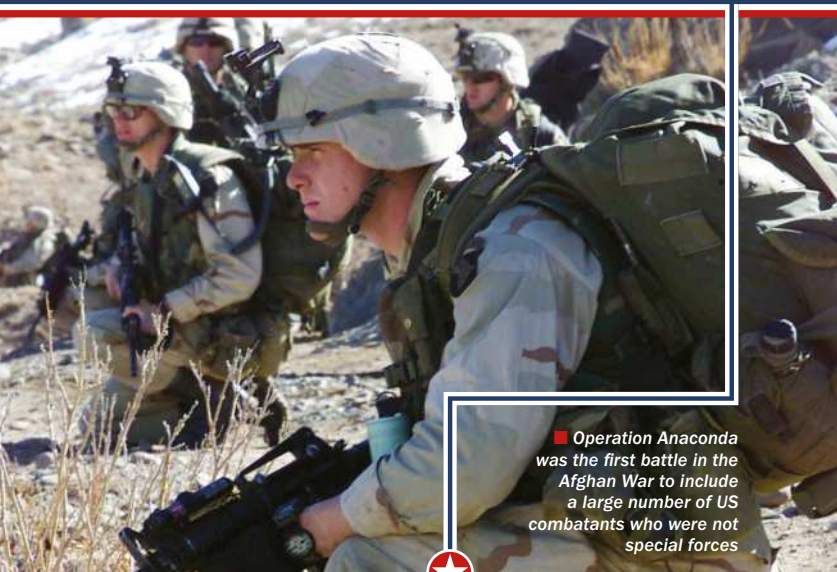
BATTLE OF TORA BORA

AFGHANISTAN, 6-17 DECEMBER 2001

Within days of 9/11, President Bush announced his intention to conduct a "war on terror". American boots were soon on the ground in Afghanistan with the aim of capturing Osama Bin Laden and drive the fundamentalist Taliban from power.

Bin Laden was thought to be hiding in Tora Bora, a mountain region close to the Pakistan border. His voice was heard in radio transmissions but the cave complex was vast, with hydroelectric power and room for over 1,000 al-Qaeda fighters. International forces joined the Afghan Northern Alliance to clear the caves and bunkers, calling in air strikes to destroy the toughest positions in the trickiest terrain. The Taliban government was comprehensively defeated, forced from one of its final strongholds in the country and swept from power, but bin Laden escaped, sneaking across the border into Pakistan.

■ The USAF dropped BLU-82 Daisycutters weighing 6.8 tonnes to destroy the underground cave bunkers



■ Operation Anaconda was the first battle in the Afghan War to include a large number of US combatants who were not special forces

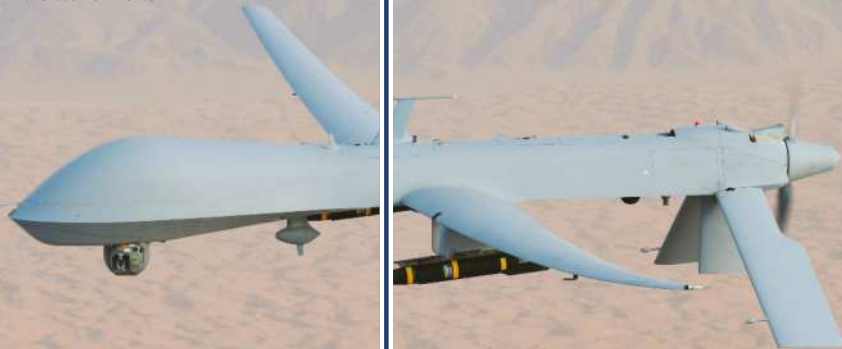
OPERATION ANACONDA

AFGHANISTAN, 1-18 MARCH 2002

Although Taliban rule collapsed, it re-emerged as an insurgent force to fight against the new government, mostly gathering in the Shahi-Kot Valley to regroup before an offensive against the new regime.

Around 1,700 US troops were joined by 1,000 Afghan soldiers and militia to clear the valley but they came up against stern resistance from up to 1,000 enemy combatants who rained down mortar and heavy machine gun fire. Seven US soldiers were killed in the Battle of Takur Ghar, a helicopter assault atop a mountain peak that would have provided an observation point. After two weeks of hard grind, the valley was eventually cleared of enemy activity. The US claimed up to 500 enemy deaths, although only 23 bodies were recovered.

■ One of al-Harethi's passengers was a US citizen, the first killed by his own government in the War on Terror



ASSASSINATION OF AL-HARETHI

YEMEN, 5 NOVEMBER 2002

Unmanned Predator drones first entered US service in 1995, initially used for reconnaissance, but early in the new millennium research began to find ways to arm the aircraft. Within a year, the drone could be armed with Hellfire missiles. Predators were first used to conduct strikes in Afghanistan in February 2002, and in November were first used by the CIA to conduct a strike outside of a war zone. The target was Qaed Salim Sinan al-Harethi, responsible for the suicide attacks on the USS Cole and MV Limberg. Al-Harithi was travelling in a car with five other suspected Al-Qaeda operatives 100 miles east of the Yemeni capital Sanaa when a Hellfire was launched at them. As the missile was supersonic, the targets had no warning they were about to be struck – all six men in the car were killed.

BATTLE OF BAGHDAD

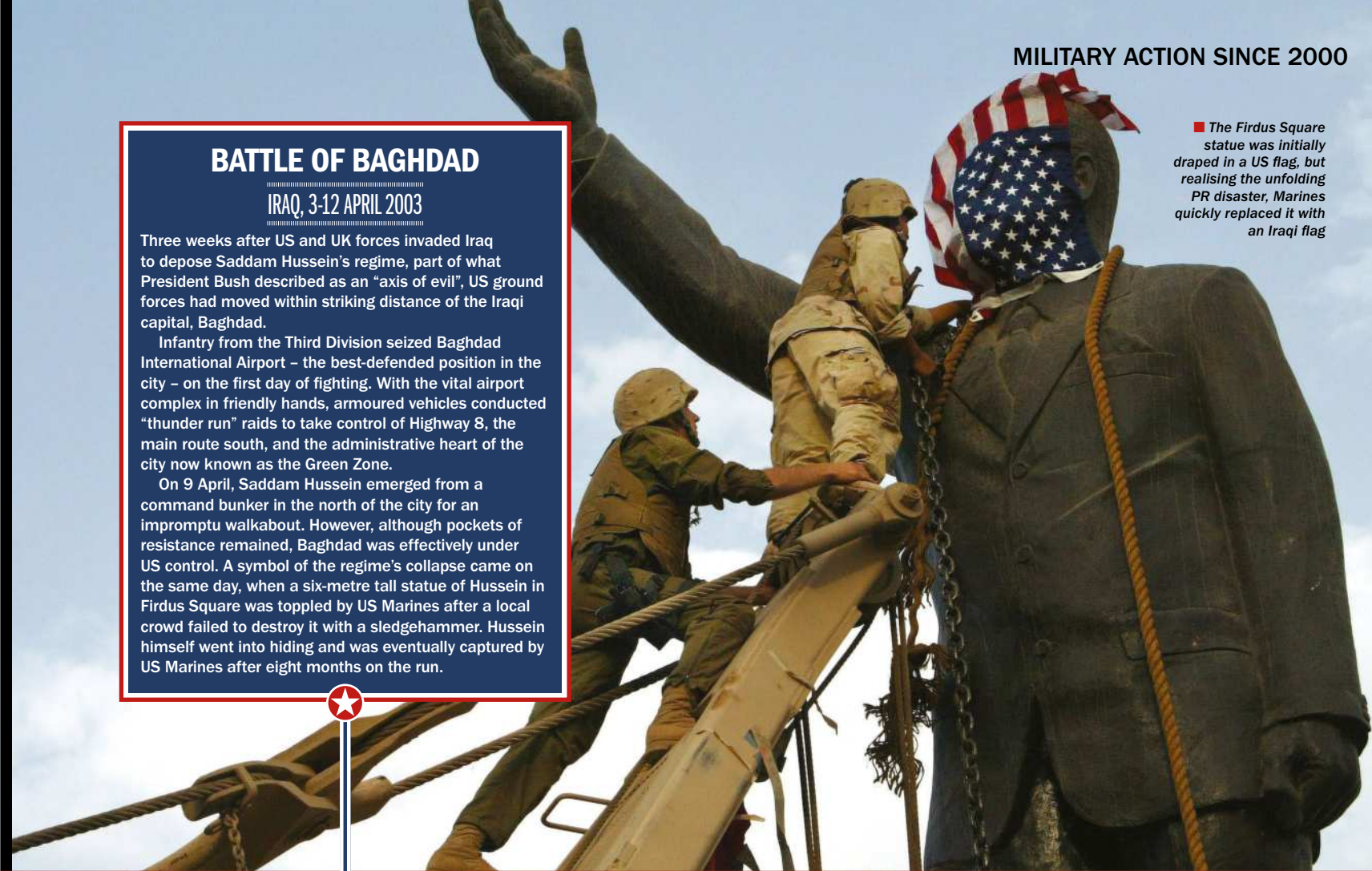
IRAQ, 3-12 APRIL 2003

Three weeks after US and UK forces invaded Iraq to depose Saddam Hussein's regime, part of what President Bush described as an "axis of evil", US ground forces had moved within striking distance of the Iraqi capital, Baghdad.

Infantry from the Third Division seized Baghdad International Airport – the best-defended position in the city – on the first day of fighting. With the vital airport complex in friendly hands, armoured vehicles conducted "thunder run" raids to take control of Highway 8, the main route south, and the administrative heart of the city now known as the Green Zone.

On 9 April, Saddam Hussein emerged from a command bunker in the north of the city for an impromptu walkabout. However, although pockets of resistance remained, Baghdad was effectively under US control. A symbol of the regime's collapse came on the same day, when a six-metre tall statue of Hussein in Firdus Square was toppled by US Marines after a local crowd failed to destroy it with a sledgehammer. Hussein himself went into hiding and was eventually captured by US Marines after eight months on the run.

■ The Firdus Square statue was initially draped in a US flag, but realising the unfolding PR disaster, Marines quickly replaced it with an Iraqi flag



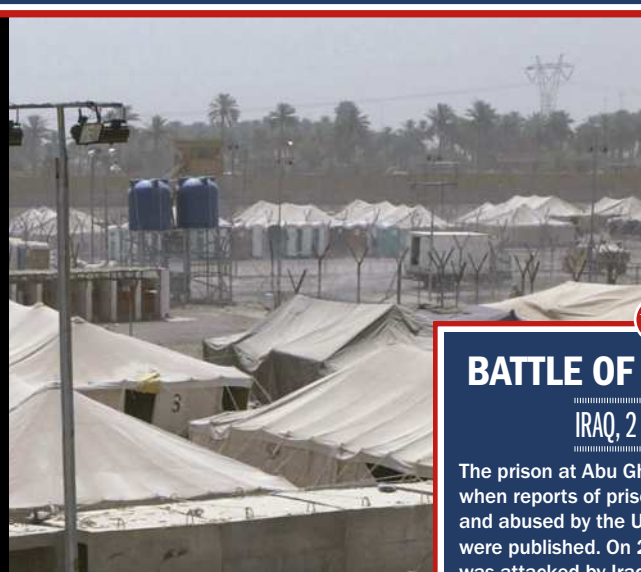
■ Nearly a third of Fallujah's mosques destroyed in the fighting – many were used as ammunition caches or fortified points by the insurgents



SECOND BATTLE OF FALLUJAH

IRAQ, 7 NOVEMBER – 23 DECEMBER 2004

Similar to the situation US forces faced in Afghanistan, the regime change following the invasion of Iraq did not lead to an immediate peace. Ba'athists from Hussein's former party joined with the radical Islamist and Iraqi nationalist groups in a loose coalition of insurgents. Having already failed to take control of Fallujah in April, retaking the city became a priority. A diversionary attack began in the west and south of the city on 7 November, followed by the main thrust from the north. After knocking out two electrical substations, the forces ground their way toward the city centre. Insurgents had planted IEDs and booby traps, bricked up stairwells and blocked streets to try to lead troops into fields of enemy fire. The main fighting was over in a week, although pockets of resistance continued for more than a month. It was the bloodiest battle of the war in terms of American losses, with 95 dead and 560 wounded.



■ Abu Ghraib prison was handed back to Iraqi authorities in 2006 and reopened in 2009 as Baghdad Central Prison

BATTLE OF ABU GHRAIB

IRAQ, 2 APRIL 2005

The prison at Abu Ghraib became notorious when reports of prisoners being tortured and abused by the US military and the CIA were published. On 2 April 2005, the prison was attacked by Iraqi insurgents who hoped to free its 3,000 prisoners. The insurgents aimed small arms fire at the guards and lobbed grenades over the walls, hoping to get close enough to explode two IEDs to breach the walls. On the roads surrounding the prison, armoured vehicles that rushed to the prison's aid were attacked.

Over two hours of fierce fighting followed the initial assault. Although the walls held, 150 detainees got over an internal fence before being recaptured. The insurgents were eventually driven back by the arrival of two Apache attack helicopters – and just in time as munitions were running so low that bayonets were being fixed in preparation for hand-to-hand fighting.



■ The AC-130 gunship that carried out a strike at Ras Kamboni flew over 1,000 miles from its base in Djibouti



BATTLE OF RAS KAMBONI

SOMALIA, 5-12 JANUARY 2007

On 28 December 2006, as part of the ongoing Somali Civil War, the Islamic Courts Union – an Islamist faction that wanted to rule Somalia through Sharia courts – retreated from the capital Mogadishu. Some of the ICU fighters fled southwest along the coast, ending up at the town of Ras Kamboni near the Kenyan border.

On 7 January, two days after Somali and Ethiopian armies began an assault on the town, the US Air Force began to offer support from the skies. Further air attacks in the vicinity of Ras Kamboni caused civilian casualties, although it is unclear whether they were carried out by the US or Ethiopian air forces.

Regardless of who was responsible, the result of air support was the liberation of Ras Kamboni from ICU control.



BATTLE OF WANAT

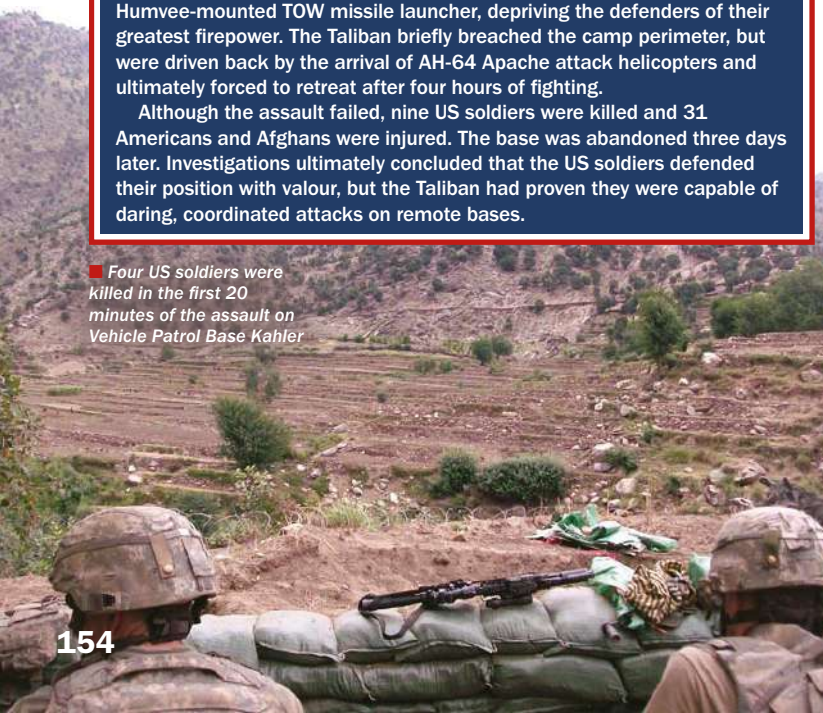
AFGHANISTAN, 13 JULY 2008

Keeping the peace and preventing the rise of insurgent groups in a country of 250,000 square miles is a tall order, a fact demonstrated in July 2008 when the Taliban attempted to destroy a remote base in the far east of Afghanistan. Only 48 US soldiers and 24 Afghan soldiers were on site to defend Vehicle Patrol Base Kahler, a small camp that had only been established five days earlier.

They were suddenly roused at 4.20am by machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades and mortar fire that destroyed the base mortar pit and Humvee-mounted TOW missile launcher, depriving the defenders of their greatest firepower. The Taliban briefly breached the camp perimeter, but were driven back by the arrival of AH-64 Apache attack helicopters and ultimately forced to retreat after four hours of fighting.

Although the assault failed, nine US soldiers were killed and 31 Americans and Afghans were injured. The base was abandoned three days later. Investigations ultimately concluded that the US soldiers defended their position with valour, but the Taliban had proven they were capable of daring, coordinated attacks on remote bases.

■ Four US soldiers were killed in the first 20 minutes of the assault on Vehicle Patrol Base Kahler



BATTLE OF DAHANEH

AFGHANISTAN, 12-15 AUGUST 2009

In the summer of 2009, President Obama authorised a troop surge in Afghanistan with the intention of removing the Taliban from their stronghold in Helmand. Part of the surge, named Operation Strike the Sword, was an assault on a small, Taliban-held town called Dahaneh. The attack began during the night, when a platoon of Marines was airlifted behind Taliban lines and took over a military compound. However, as dawn broke, troops moving into the town came under sustained fire and the level of resistance suggested that the Taliban were aware of an impending attack.

Greater progress was made on the second day, when AH-1W SuperCobra helicopters, A-10 Thunderbolt II aeroplanes and surface-to-surface missiles pounded the surrounding hillsides, positions from which Taliban fighters were holding back Marine progress through the town. The following day saw the battle come to a successful conclusion when a fortified compound on the far edge of Dahaneh was infiltrated and cleared.



■ Five days after the battle, Dahaneh was sufficiently peaceful that residents of Dahaneh were able to vote in the Afghan Presidential election.

■ Without Apache attack helicopters, Iraqi commanders would have been unable to clear the insurgents from the Palm Grove



BATTLE OF THE PALM GROVE

IRAQ, 10-13 SEPTEMBER 2010

The Battle of the Palm Grove occurred when 49 US soldiers from the Second Advise and Assist Brigade entered a 12-acre orchard near Hudaiby, a small village 50 miles north of Baghdad, in support of 200 members of the Iraqi Army and police force. They were carrying out a search and sweep operation, hoping to clear out up to 25 insurgents who had been planting IEDs in Hudaiby.

The insurgents dug trenches, planted bombs and positioned snipers in the trees to pick off the approaching forces, leading to the US calling in air support from Apache helicopters and F-16 fighters. Despite dropping two 500-pound bombs, the insurgents slipped away after three days of clashes in the last major battle fought by US personnel in the Iraq War.

OPERATION ODYSSEY DAWN

LIBYA, 19-31 MARCH 2011

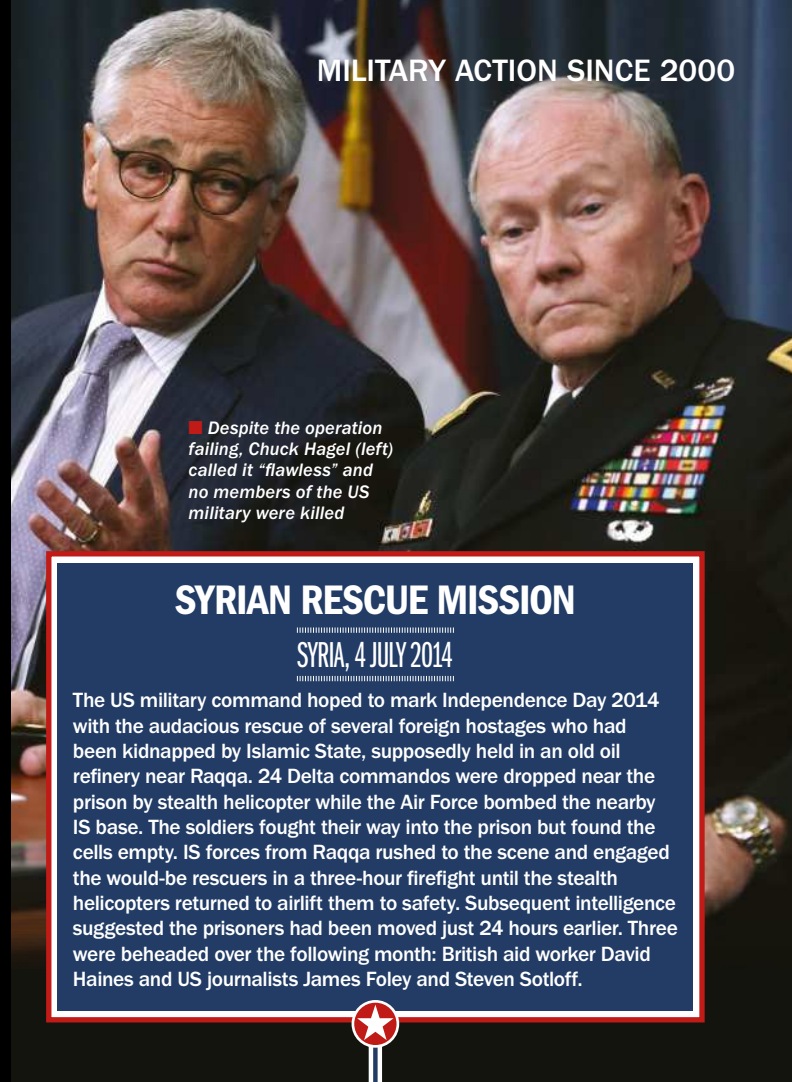
When the revolutionary Arab Spring swept across North Africa and the Middle East in 2011, Muammar Gaddafi – the Libyan leader and long-time enemy of the USA – found himself fighting a civil war against rebels in his own country.

On 17 March, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1973, authorising a no-fly zone across Libya. When Libyan forces continued to attack rebel positions in shelling on Misrata, Ajdabiya and Benghazi, action began to impose the no-fly zone. Further strikes occurred over the next few days, conducted by both the US Navy and Air Force, with the aim of destroying Libyan airfields and air defences.

The operation was a success – the Libyan Air Force was grounded and not a single coalition plane was downed. Command passed to NATO by the end of the month. By the end of the year, the civil war ended with Gaddafi's capture and execution.



■ Ship-fired tomahawk cruise missiles struck Libyan targets, as did B-2 stealth bombers, and F-15 and F-16 fighter aircraft



■ Despite the operation failing, Chuck Hagel (left) called it "flawless" and no members of the US military were killed

SYRIAN RESCUE MISSION

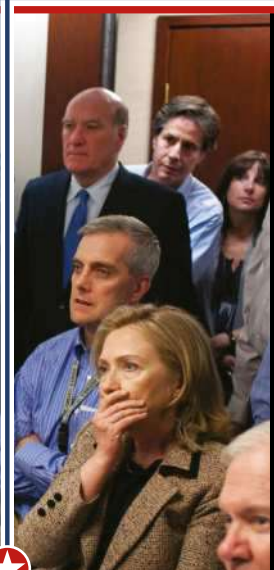
SYRIA, 4 JULY 2014

The US military command hoped to mark Independence Day 2014 with the audacious rescue of several foreign hostages who had been kidnapped by Islamic State, supposedly held in an old oil refinery near Raqqa. 24 Delta commandos were dropped near the prison by stealth helicopter while the Air Force bombed the nearby IS base. The soldiers fought their way into the prison but found the cells empty. IS forces from Raqqa rushed to the scene and engaged the would-be rescuers in a three-hour firefight until the stealth helicopters returned to airlift them to safety. Subsequent intelligence suggested the prisoners had been moved just 24 hours earlier. Three were beheaded over the following month: British aid worker David Haines and US journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff.

■ President Obama initially favoured bombing the compound from the air, but changed his mind after it was revealed at least one other nearby house would be destroyed



■ The US claimed 58 of 59 missiles hit the base, while Russia claimed only 23 did – independent satellite analysis suggests there were hits on 44 targets



SHAYRAT MISSILE STRIKE

SYRIA, 7 APRIL 2017

Days after an alleged chemical weapons attack on the town of Khan Shaykhun by Syrian government forces in its civil war, President Trump ordered a military response – 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles were launched from USS Ross and USS Porter in the Mediterranean Sea. Some damage was inflicted on Shayrat Airbase, one of the Syrian Air Force's major airfields. Examination of satellite imagery suggests that 15 aircraft were destroyed or damaged and five surface-to-air missile batteries were struck. Up to nine soldiers were killed, including a general, with a similar number of civilian casualties. However, advance notice of the strike was reportedly given to Russia, allies of Syria, which may have given the Syrian Air Force time to move personnel and planes before the missiles landed. Within hours of the attack, the Syrian jets were able to take off from the base to attack rebel positions in Khan Shaykhun – the same town that suffered the chemical attack that caused the missile strikes in the first place.

OPERATION NEPTUNE SPEAR

PAKISTAN, 2 MAY 2011

Nearly a decade after the 9/11 attacks, the long search for Osama bin Laden was eventually narrowed down to a compound in Abbottabad. The three-storey house, less than a mile from Pakistan Military Academy, was surrounded by a five-metre concrete wall topped with barbed wire.

24 Navy SEALs were airlifted to the compound in two Black Hawk stealth helicopters. One of the helicopters crash-landed inside the compound walls, but nobody on board was injured and the raid continued as planned. The SEALs blew open the main door and entered the house, encountering men, women and children on each level. Bin Laden was found on the top floor and was hit by gunfire in the head and body. Reports of exactly what happened are contradictory: bin Laden may have been cowering in a corner, sheltering behind a woman or reaching for a weapon. His body was flown out with the assault team and buried at sea within ten hours. The bodies of four others killed in the operation were left behind, as were the handcuffed, surviving residents of the compound.

■ Almost 75 years on, the bombing of Nagasaki remains the most powerful wartime explosion

WEAPONS OF WAR

FROM MUSKET VOLLEYS TO NUCLEAR WAR, DISCOVER
HOW US WEAPONRY HAS EVOLVED AND DEVELOPED
OVER TWO CENTURIES OF RAPID CHANGE

WORDS SCOTT REEVES

The United States was created in the crucible of war. The 13 rebellious colonies had no national army or navy and were outgunned by the most powerful country on Earth, but under George Washington's leadership the might of the British Empire was subdued and independence was granted after over eight years of fighting.

The new nation expanded rapidly westwards, eventually growing into the third largest country in the world. Equally quick was the development of the US military, deemed

necessary to protect the new nation and help expand its borders. To supply the demand that came from the burgeoning armed forces, the fledgling American armament industry shifted from churning out rudimentary muskets to mass-producing machine guns and rifles. Yet less than a century after independence the US slipped into civil war, and the new firepower caused devastation that was previously unthinkable – the 22,000 casualties suffered on one day at the Battle of Antietam remains the bloodiest day in US military history.

The 20th century saw warfare take to the skies and the US military become the most powerful in the world. The First and Second World Wars and Cold War led to great leaps in American innovation that culminated in the awesome power of nuclear weapons, multi-purpose helicopters and the hi-tech marvels of stealth aircraft.

These six iconic weapons each played a key role in the history of the United States – a country that has transformed from a colony into a world superpower.

■ Now considered to be a valuable find, there are perhaps only ten genuine Committee of Safety muskets in modern collections

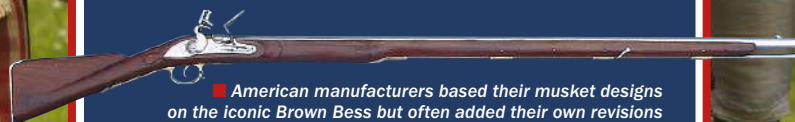
COMMITTEE OF SAFETY MUSKET

The weapon that helped to forge a new nation

When the American colonies rose up in rebellion in 1775, the fledgling nation faced a major problem – a severe lack of firepower. If the British Redcoats chose to return the colonies to loyalty through force, it appeared that the colonists were powerless to resist.

Civilian militias were rapidly set up to defend themselves and became known as Minutemen since they were supposed to be ready to defend their communities at a minute's notice. They were usually managed by a local Committee of Safety, which contracted local gunmakers to supply them with military-grade firearms. The Committee of Safety muskets varied widely in their quality – a few were very fine, but the majority were crudely constructed so that they could be churned out as quickly as possible. Mostly they copied the flintlock design of the Brown Bess, the musket carried by the British Army, and could fire three or four balls a minute.

Committee of Safety muskets were vital in preventing the rebellion being crushed in its first months and were used with particular success at the battles of Lexington and Concord. The first weapons produced for the American military served notice that the rebels would not be quashed without a fight.



■ American manufacturers based their musket designs on the iconic Brown Bess but often added their own revisions



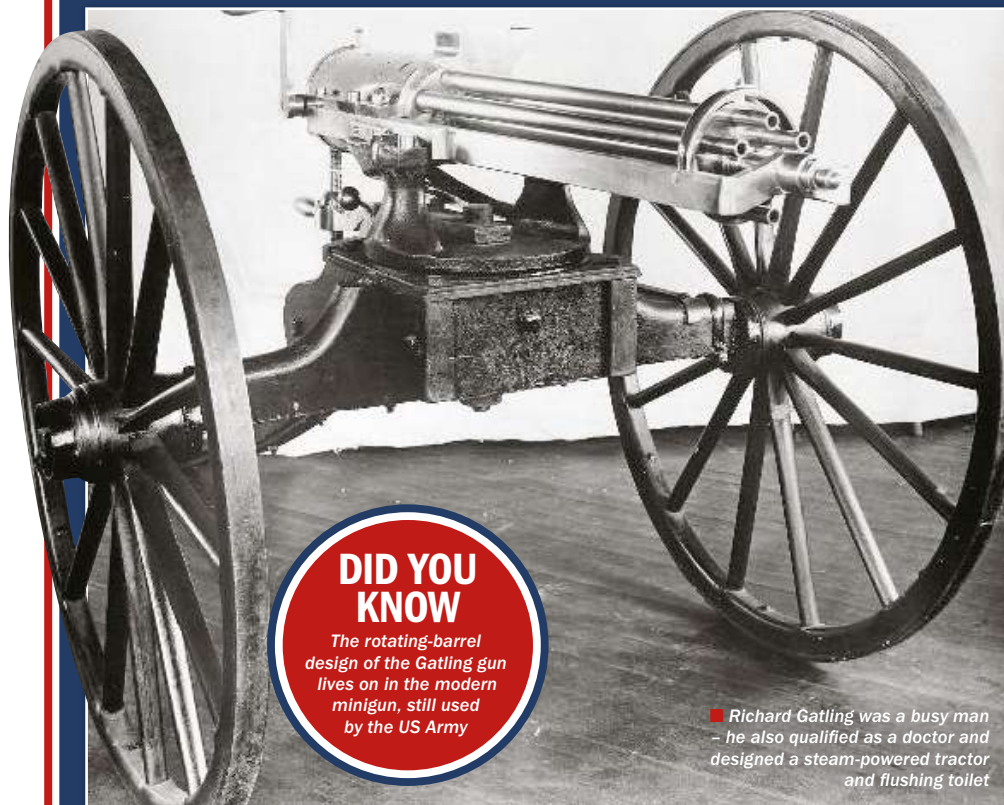
GATLING GUN

The machine gun that fired multiple bullets a second

When Richard Gatling invented his rapid-fire machine gun in 1861, he wanted it to save lives rather than take them – he hoped that such an offensive weapon would make leaders realise the futility of employing mass armies in war. He was too late. The United States had just fallen into civil war, with the Southern states seceding from the Union.

Operated by a soldier turning a hand crank, the Gatling gun's six barrels rotated around a central shaft, with each firing a bullet in turn. Up to 600 bullets a minute could be fired, although accuracy and reliability issues plagued the early designs. This meant that the US military did not officially adopt the Gatling gun until after the war was over, although a couple of dozens were personally purchased by generals to beef up their firepower.

Later refinements improved the design and led to the Gatling gun being used around the world until it was eventually superseded by fully automatic machine guns like the Maxim gun. A Gatling gun was even turned on the American people during the Great Railroad Strike of 1877, when the Pennsylvania state militia fired on crowds of strikers, killing 40.



DID YOU KNOW

The rotating-barrel design of the Gatling gun lives on in the modern minigun, still used by the US Army

■ Richard Gatling was a busy man – he also qualified as a doctor and designed a steam-powered tractor and flushing toilet



■ US Marines practise firing their M1903 Springfield rifles in the French trenches in 1918



SPRINGFIELD RIFLE

The gun carried by American servicemen for decades

The Springfield Armoury churned out weapons for the United States for almost two centuries, but it was in 1855 that the company began production of the rifle that bears its name. The design underwent more than 20 substantial revisions over the next 67 years, changing from a single-shot rifled musket into a bolt-action repeating rifle.

The most famous variant of the Springfield rifle is the 1903 model, which was carried across the Atlantic and taken into the trenches after the US joined the First World War in 1917. Although officially replaced as the standard infantry rifle by the faster-firing semi-automatic M1 Garand in 1936, the M1903 Springfield remained in use by American troops during the Second World War, and it was even used by snipers in Korea and Vietnam.

The M1903 was remarkably accurate and reliable. It could handle higher-velocity rounds than its predecessors and the five-round clips were easier to load, meaning that soldiers could fire 15 bullets a minute. It was a long way from its Civil War predecessor, which could fire a maximum of three bullets a minute and was accurate only over one-fifth of the distance.



■ Jammed Springfield rifles were once thought to have led to the annihilation of Custer's battalion at Little Bighorn, although archaeological investigations have proven this to be false



ATOMIC BOMB

The bomb that could destroy an entire city

As the Second World War progressed, scientists on both sides of the Atlantic were engaged in a secret race to produce the most powerful weapon the world had ever known. The first to succeed was Robert Oppenheimer's team based at Los Alamos, who exploded a test nuclear-fission-powered atomic bomb on 16 July 1945. Just three weeks later, a bomb was loaded on to a B29 Superfortress named Enola Gay. Six hours after taking off from Tinian, a small island in the west Pacific, the bomber dropped the atomic bomb – nicknamed Little Boy – over the city of Hiroshima.

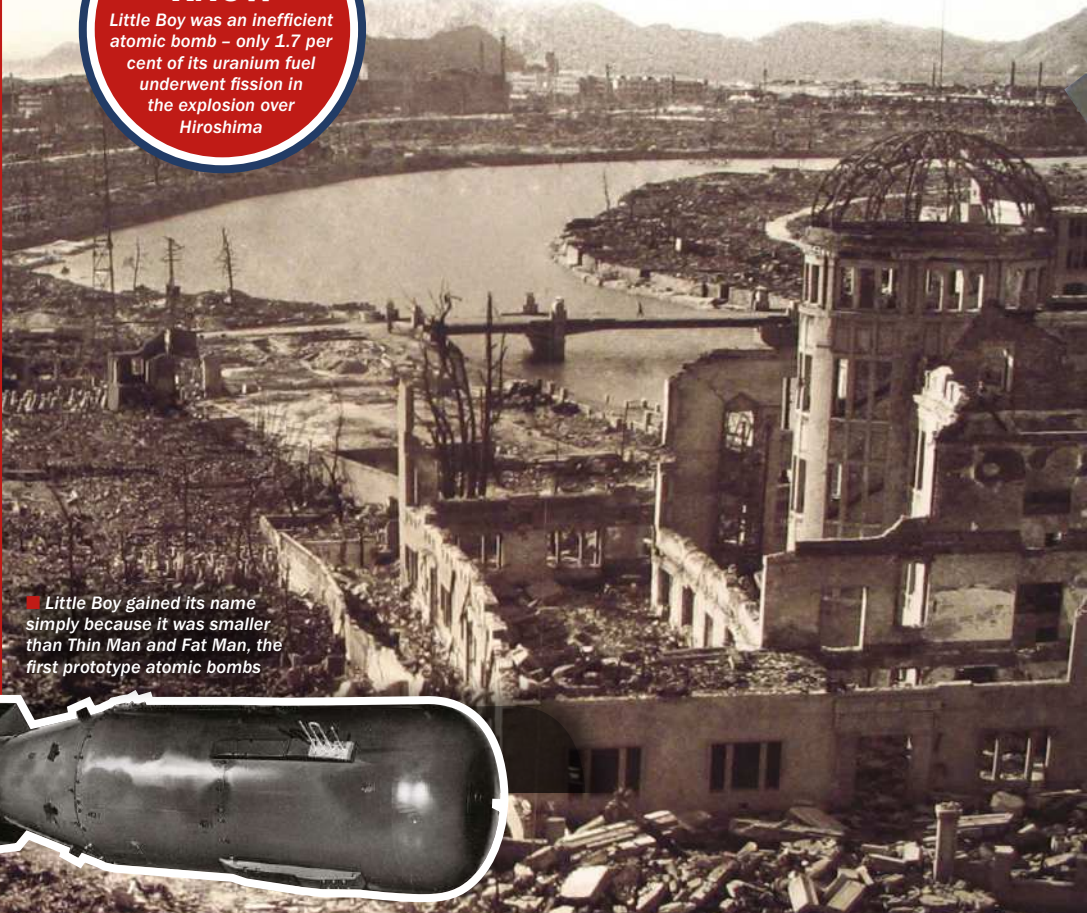
It was the first time nuclear weapons had been used in war. The blast, equivalent to 16 kilotons of TNT, destroyed buildings across 12.2 square kilometres. Around 80,000 people – 30 per cent of the population – were killed by the blast and in the resulting firestorm. Three days later, the US air force dropped another atomic bomb on Nagasaki.

Thankfully, nuclear weapons have never been used in conflict again, although there have been over 2,000 test explosions around the world. Within seven years, atomic bombs were superseded by fusion-based thermonuclear weapons of almost unimaginable strength – the first test explosion was over 450 times the power of the Hiroshima bomb.

DID YOU KNOW

Little Boy was an inefficient atomic bomb – only 1.7 per cent of its uranium fuel underwent fission in the explosion over Hiroshima

■ Immediate relief efforts at Hiroshima were hampered because over 90 per cent of the city's doctors and nurses were killed in the explosion



■ Little Boy gained its name simply because it was smaller than Thin Man and Fat Man, the first prototype atomic bombs





UH-1 IROQUOIS

The helicopter that symbolised the slog of Vietnam

Originally designated the HU-1 (hence its popular nickname, 'Huey'), the UH-1 Iroquois was a utility helicopter that first saw action in Vietnam. There it played a number of roles, including cargo and personnel transport, search and rescue, air assault and ground attack, and it has become an enduring symbol of US involvement in Vietnam.

The Huey had wide doors, allowing troops to get in and out fast in a landing zone that was under fire, while its crew fired machine guns from each door, secured by a monkey strap as the helicopter craft angled and tilted. The whup-whup-whup of a Huey's rotors was a familiar sound to the American soldiers who fought in the jungle, and an especially welcome one to wounded soldiers who were awaiting evacuation.

Such was the success of the Huey that it became the most produced military helicopter, with more than 16,000 built and used by more than 60 countries around the world. Although retired from US Army service in 2016, Hueys are still used by the US Navy and Air Force, and private contractors have used them on behalf of the Drugs Enforcement Administration in counter-narcotics raids in Afghanistan.



■ The speed and manoeuvrability of the Huey allowed the US Army to conduct search and destroy missions, such as this one in 1966



"IT WAS DURING THE GULF WAR THAT THE NIGHTHAWK CAME INTO ITS OWN, FLYING 1,300 MISSIONS TO DROP LASER-GUIDED BOMBS"

F-117 NIGHTHAWK

The stealth fighter that ruled the air in the Gulf

In October 1983, a radical new aircraft entered service in the US Air Force. The unusual, faceted shape was designed to minimise its visibility to radar, but it was also aerodynamically unstable and required constant corrections from an onboard computer to keep it in the air.

Such was the shroud of secrecy that surrounded the F-117 Nighthawk that it was only revealed to the public six years later in 1989. The same year, the stealth fighter conducted its first combat mission when two Nighthawks dropped bombs during the US invasion of Panama. But it was during the Gulf War that the Nighthawk came into its own, flying 1,300 missions to drop laser-guided bombs in precision strikes against Iraqi targets, although claims in the media probably overstated its effectiveness.

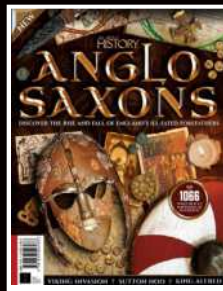
Only one Nighthawk was shot down by enemy action, over the former Yugoslavia in 1999. When Russian observers were invited to view the wreck by Serbian forces, it compromised the still-classified stealth technology for the first time. However, the Nighthawk was already showing signs of being superseded and it was retired in 2008, although several are mothballed in case they are recalled for future service.

DID YOU KNOW

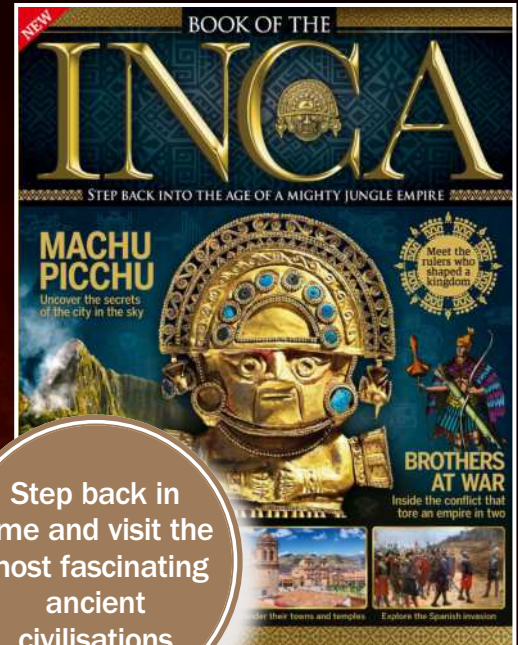
Each of the 64 F-117 Nighthawks cost an average of \$111 million to build

■ The 558 pilots who flew the Nighthawk called themselves 'bandits'

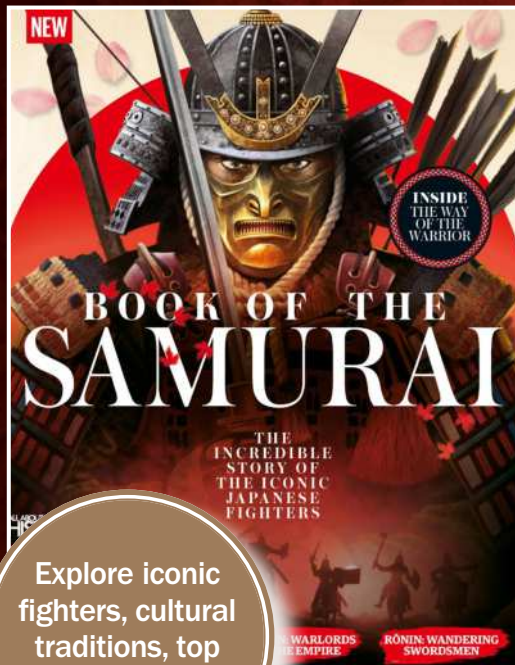
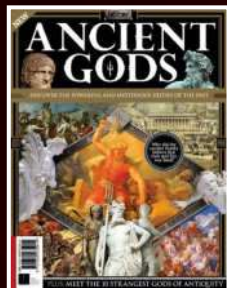
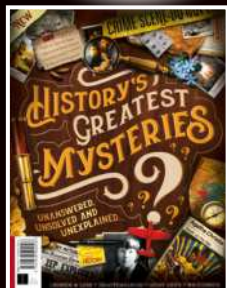




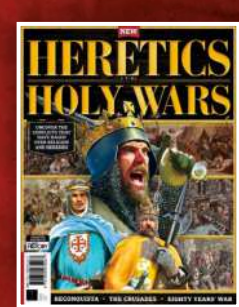
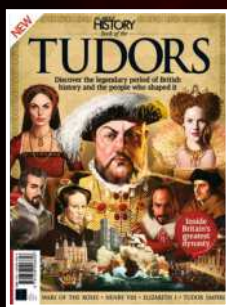
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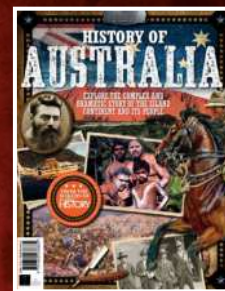
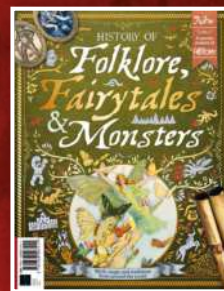
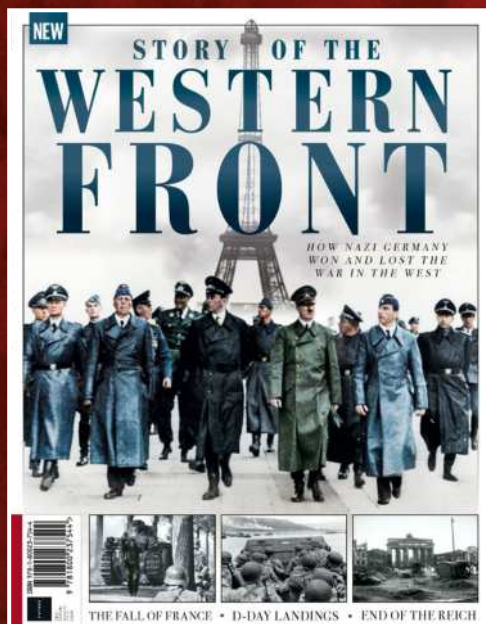
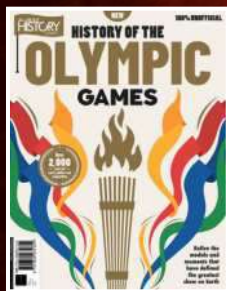
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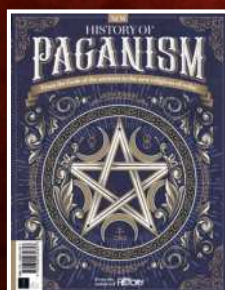
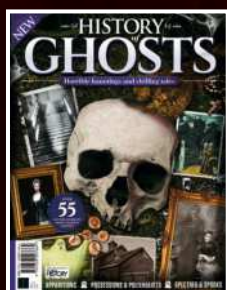


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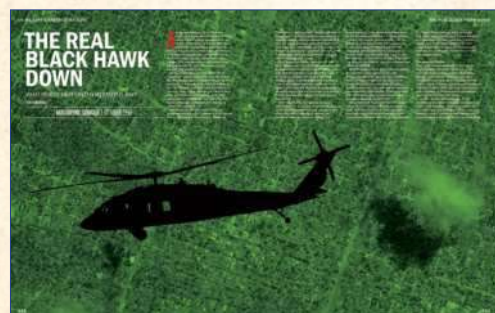
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